HOW TO GET BETTER AT THINGS YOU DON'T THINK YOU'RE BAD AT BY 2020

JOSE FRANCO

DEDICATION

Two weeks after the initial shock of Donald Trump's 2016 victory, rather than complain about the election's outcome, I chose to self-reflect and be proactive. During downtime at work, I began writing weekly op-ed submissions to major outlets like The New York Times and The Washington Post—none of which were ever published. Instead of relying on popular media like YouTube, Facebook, or Twitter, I wanted to foster a debate grounded in empirical evidence, practical relevance, my psychological insights, cultural context, and ethical considerations. When I wasn't serving smoothies or shots of wheatgrass at Stoop Juice, I channeled my curiosity and skepticism into these writings, choosing to approach Donald Trump with unconditional love, believing that every person is capable of becoming an immortal expression of love.

As I reflect on this journey, I find it ironic that the persistent rejections from these major media outlets became my greatest teachers. Over the years, my submissions found a home in smaller platforms like Patch.com and LinkedIn, where they resonated with more engaged communities. Initially, the rejections stung, but they eventually became a source of gratitude for two reasons. First, they reminded me of my own insignificance—a humbling, yet liberating realization. Second, they offered me a chance for self-reflection, forcing me to evaluate my work based on my internal values rather than seeking external validation. In a world obsessed with applause and recognition, I've come to measure my growth by what truly matters to me, understanding that rejection is not an end but a critical part of the journey. Each chapter in this book reflects these lessons—initially conceived as op-eds during a turbulent time in American history, these writings explore personal growth, political and economic critiques, and insights drawn from my experiences as a small business owner, father, and concerned citizen striving for a more just world.

On occasions I disagree with the President, I refuse to believe he's someone who is so poor, all he really has is money. Nor am I naive, despite keeping an open heart and mind, there is a small (.001%) probability that my free e-book moves Donald Trump to prioritize morality over incentives in the context of capitalism. Regardless of Trump, capitalism often emphasizes individual self-interest and pursuit of personal success. These values can sometimes overshadow moral concerns, leading individuals to prioritize incentives within the existing system. Over time, individuals may become desensitized to the existing inequalities generated by capitalism. If economic disparities become normalized, people may not perceive them as inherently immoral but rather as a natural outcome of the system.

Some individuals may not fully grasp the ethical implications of certain economic systems, or they may not be aware of alternative models that prioritize morality. Education and awareness play a crucial role in shaping perspectives on these issues. Humans are often influenced by cognitive biases, such as the status quo bias or the belief in a just world, which can hinder our willingness to challenge existing systems, even when faced with evidence of moral shortcomings. People may resist prioritizing morality over incentives if they perceive it as conflicting with their political or ideological beliefs. Addressing these challenges involves fostering a broader societal dialogue about the ethical implications of economic systems, promoting education on alternative models, and encouraging incentives and morality within a capitalist framework requires thoughtful and nuanced discussions that consider both individual and collective well-being.

President Trump, I believe in free speech and the importance of a scientific approach to ideas, suggesting that unfettered discussion and criticism are essential for the growth of knowledge and the improvement of society. Since I've never met him, my guess is that Donald Trump identifies with most men's desire to be a strong, protective figure for their children. Should these like minded fathers also make a conscientious effort to strike a balance between keeping their children safe and allowing them to explore the world and learn from their own experiences? It may've been challenging for Fred Trump (Donald's dad) to find the right balance between protecting and letting go. Fathers are often seen as authority figures in the family, responsible for setting rules and enforcing discipline. However, they also need to establish a nurturing and loving relationship with their children. Balancing discipline and authority with warmth and emotional connection can be a delicate paradox to manage.

Fathers often feel the pressure to provide for their families financially. Balancing work commitments and quality time with children can be challenging, as they strive to meet their children's material needs while also being present and emotionally available for them. Fathers are significant role models for their children, and they often feel the weight of setting a good example. However, they also face the paradox of being imperfect human beings. Striving to be a positive role model while acknowledging their own flaws and mistakes can be a struggle. Fathers want their children to grow up to be independent and self-sufficient individuals. However, they may also experience conflicting emotions when their children become more autonomous, as they navigate the bittersweet reality of their children needing them less.

The following eight questions are for Donald Trump and fathers who share the President's views. Question number nine is solely for my wife.

1.How much tolerance should a society extend to ideas and individuals who, if given unlimited freedom, might seek to undermine that very tolerance?

2.How can a society safeguard itself against ideologies or individuals who exploit free speech to propagate ideas that, if implemented, would lead to the destruction of the open society?

3.Does unlimited free speech imply a lack of responsibility for the consequences of one's speech? Should there be some accountability for spreading harmful or false information?

4.How can a balance be struck between protecting individual freedom of expression and maintaining social cohesion and stability?

5.When the rate of return on capital is consistently higher than the rate of economic growth, wealth and income inequality tend to increase. Is this sustainable and what are the consequences of such dynamics?

6.Does wealth concentration limits opportunities for upward mobility, particularly for those without inherited wealth?

7.What role does inherited wealth and capital play in perpetuating economic inequality?

8.How can Donald Trump do a better job of informing US citizens that the only three certainties in life are pain, uncertainty and hard work?

Despite my wife (of 27 years) objection to me making my writings public for fear of instigating unnecessary attention to myself and my family , I've shared my thoughts in this free e-book. I mostly write to articulate strategies that help me cope with life's uncertainties, pain and continuous hard work. As I embrace and continually remind myself of my insignificance, I simultaneously convince myself to measure moments of happiness not by popularity but by the true voice of my conscience. Whereas, my better half thinks silence is scarce and rare and wants me to deliberately keep myself out of the conversation and subsist without its validation. She has repeatedly asked me to be quiet since silence is the respite of the confident and the strong. My astute wife believes it is well intended fools like me, who at times forgets to embrace our insignificance. Instead, I should be sitting alone quietly, in my room.

9.How could I've gotten such a smart and beautiful wife had I only stayed sitting alone quietly, in my room?

Testimonials

I'd like to thank Mr. Franco for writing a book that considers the larger issues, with insight, rather than just knee-jerk hatred of someone or something. Jose writes, “Economists believe the line is between free-enterprise and planning, and that the logical extremes are not possible. Most politicians and economists’ inability to be forthcoming and transparent isn’t a coincidence. One has to be selfless and egoless to give perfect guidance as to where to draw the line since it exposes your preferences and biases. On occasions lines are drawn, voters would probably draw lines in different places. But as soon as you admit that the extreme is not possible, and that a line has to be drawn, you are, on your own argument, done for since you are trying to persuade us that as soon as one moves an inch in the planned direction you are necessarily launched on the slippery path which will lead you in due course over the economic cliff”. Much needed book in a time many of us find it easier to destroy than to build, to criticize than to create. Excellent, thought provoking, a free download to share with family and friends that challenges each of us to be better citizens.

Sincerely, Gail Winters - Editor 7thaveshops blog

I agree that neutrality or objectivity is impossible, and that it is harmful in many occasions to believe in its existence. But I reject the idea that Donald Trump only represents a "worse" variety of bias. There is bias, which is unavoidable, and then there is straight-up misinformation. "Creative" epistemology is a tool of manipulation. We can't let a powerful political figure get away with erasing all common standards of "how we know what we know."

Osvaldo Romero - (smartest guy in the room) & Stoop Juice Customer

I don’t think college is an option for me since I don’t know any skills worth paying for that will be relevant 8 years from now. The majority of my friends feel little incentive to invest in developing short lived skills too. Despite being a person of faith, I found myself blaming immigrants for not finding steady work. Fortunately, I now focus on outperforming everybody at work regardless of where they come from. If all the people in America who have a tough time finding work made themselves indispensable at work, the number of undocumented workers crossing the border would drop by a lot. I’ve shared Jose Franco’s free e-book with all my friends who’ve noticed my new positive attitude.

Rory Cager - Cable TV Installer

I get Jose Franco’s intent and even agree with his Augustinian approach. However, Jose conveniently ignore when certain facts are ignored or completely contradicted, this is not a

"bias" it's a lie. Saying something like the Iran Nuclear Deal is a bad deal is an opinion that is subject to bias. Saying something like there was no collusion and no obstruction in the face of the comprehensive 400 page Mueller report is simply a lie. Unfortunately, we are dealing with a president and administration and, indeed, nearly an entire political party who rather believe in lies than the truth. That's why a majority of the Republican party still think Obama was not born in the United States. His place of birth is in America. That's a truth, not a liberal bias or opinion.

Barry Spinoza - High School Principal

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At my best, I always choose love over fear, despite knowing there is simply no way of providing factual, 'unbiased' answers to the really big issues facing societies.

FOREWORD

In order to begin a transparent, well intentioned discussion to bring Americans together, it's necessary to agree the resistance we face is either conscious or unconscious. If well meaning citizens insist they have nothing to hide, understand what is involved and have strong motivation, we can only assume the resistance must be unconscious. The goal of this book is to bring attention to the things we don't think we're bad at and help individuals work through the unconscious resistance. This will involve a great deal of introspection and even then, it's an extremely difficult job. One doesn't usually have proper insight into ones own emotional makeup. Most of us spend our time trying to rationalize our behavior as a result of our lack of self awareness. Please share free e-book to encourage friends and family to participate in the discussion.

LIFE COACHING PHILOSOPHY

Openness and awareness begins with the ability to self-critique and reflect upon things central to one's own beliefs, thoughts, actions, behavior, and results. Openness can inform private, personal or group discussions. Ideally, all capable people should look for reasons to start/continue the work of self improvement. Nobody is equal to anybody. Even the same person is not equal to him/herself on different days. The first steps to continuous improvement is to know yourself, practice consciousness and be in the moment. As Americans, we overwhelmingly prefer the principle of private property — that wealth belongs to those who produce it. The reasons are pragmatic. Before an economy can have a distribution problem, there must be a product to be distributed. No other incentive keeps people continually interested in doing those things that encourage production as sought after wealth, or money, that their labor or property has brought into being. The principle of private property is embraced by socialists and capitalists all the same. Private property is also the ethical heart of the labor movement, and argues that every worker owns his or her own labor power and is thus entitled to receive, as a right, all of the wealth his or her labor produces in the marketplace. The private property principle makes it possible to objectively determine economic value and competitive markets. Without competitive markets, how can we determine the price of the items we buy and sell? If not, distribution of goods would be settled by brute force or arbitrary opinion.

Despite having different business models and intentions, Stoop Juice and Donald Trump use social media to try to shape opinions. As the owner of an organic juice bar, I use Twitter to put my customers at the center and with work, do a good job at reaching my intended

audience. On LinkedIn, I've written over 60 articles easily accessible to existing and potential customers. Our typical patron is interested in a healthy balanced life style consisting of healthy food options, exercise and consciousness. By posting original articles reflecting my customer's interest on Facebook, Instagram, Google, and Twitter regularly, my brand's exposure has increased exponentially. I commonly create content to increase brand awareness and sales (online, print, radio and television). A new recipe or the smoothie of the day are common go to's to promote healthy food choices. Instructional videos on exercise are everywhere and also promotes desired healthy lifestyle. These videos are featured in ad spots during shows Stoop Juice intended demographic is likely to view.

A huge obstacle to normalizing the balanced lifestyle I promote is the few TV series, reports and features which promote thoughtfulness, self awareness and consciousness. Donald Trump regularly complains about the media too. The owners of the media are usually large corporations whose primary focus is profits. And so it isn't so much that the media are selling your product, they're also selling other advertiser's products. A mindful juice bar can't compete with what's reported in the news by the complicity of the media with advertisers. Today, even at the local level, the government, corporations and big institutions know how to play the media game. They know how to influence the news narrative. They feed media scoops, official accounts, interviews with the 'experts'. They make themselves crucial to the process of journalism. So, those in power and those who report on them are in bed with each other and only pay lip service to individuals like me who seek "the truth". When Stoop Juice competes with corporations that advertise unhealthy processed food with big advertising budgets, we are pushed to the margins. Since our offering strays away from the consensus, the same media outlet we've used with past success are in action discrediting our sources, trashing our articles and diverting our conversation with potential customers to other entities willing to pay. These savvy ads will negatively reference actors as nerds instead of well informed people, call us disparaging names like "grass grazers" in place of vegans to create a common enemy to fear which helps corral public opinion against our balanced living lifestyle. Does this underwhelming yet unavoidable practice of the media justify Donald Trump cancelling the White House Daily Press Briefing?

Instead of juices and smoothies, Trump is selling policies and ideas on Twitter. The President believes many conservatives think liberal-minded individuals treat Rachel Maddow's words as gospel, which may explain his regular attacks on Ms. Maddow. At the same time, many Liberals think most conservatives flock to Fox News and absorb almost everything said without a hint of skepticism." I disagree with both these binary labeled views. Not all Americans are like the President who adhere to labeled views (liberal,

Conservative), packaged for people to easily choose external commonalities in order to avoid the continuous work of being in the moment and self reflection.

At the same time, old media (newspapers, TV, radio) have proved more resilient than many observers expected. Despite this, their business models continue to be severely undermined. Aware of this, Donald Trump senses the media's vulnerability and will not let up. Trump's nostalgic message (M.A.G.A.) bets most Americans are reactive and will continue to think success in the future is just the natural next part of the story without having to do any work. These citizens comfort themselves with a false sense of security—not realizing all future successes are rooted in work, creativity, persistence, and luck.

Whether in 2020 or 2024, Donald Trump's presidency will come to an end. In a perfect world, the President eventually will confront his dark side. What are the chances he frees himself of his internal struggles by writing the things that trouble him in a journal? Will Donald Trump ever be capable at laughing at himself or begin to meditate with a focus on self-compassion and acceptance of his own humanness? Will DT think of his good qualities and accept the possibility that he may have many bad qualities too? and be okay with it? Will Donald Trump realize that his shadow side is a reflection of his power, his honesty, and passion? Or will he ever feel safe enough to open up to someone he trust, possibly a therapist?

Instead of being a "yes man" to Donald Trump, I offer the President doses of "tough love" and insight, the kind of love that promotes the long term welfare of both the people of United States and the President. Donald Trump is perceived by many Americans to be anti enlightenment since he regularly contradicts himself with no clear philosophy or theology that can be easily used for both teaching and/or learning. By Enlightenment I'm referring to the intellectual movement emphasizing reason and individualism rather than tradition. Before I can move anyone through debate or criticize Donald Trump, I must first move myself by being conscious and in the moment. I believe that we start living consciously after surrendering to our individual reality through self reflection. I ask myself, "Is it money? Is it that I'm wrong? Could it be that I'm hating on the President because I have no name recognition? Am I too pessimistic? Or am I simply bias and afraid to put in the necessary work?"

Is it because of money? Have I invested time or effort into a business the President's policies hinders? Most people don't like to see their investment go to waste, even if the task, object, or goal is no longer worth the cost, like mining coal. The President's policy may dampen the mood of many of my customers but they don't drastically affect my business.

I recognize I'm not perfect. In the past, when confronted with a decision, I would regularly make judgments based on recent events or information that I could recall. I would substitute one question for another: I wished to estimate… the frequency of an event, but I'd pick the impression that was recent and easiest to recall. Unawareness of this bias can lead to poor decisions. I believe in the wake of the tragic events of 9/11, with images of burning buildings and broken rubble fresh in their minds, politicians quickly voted to implement invasive policies to make us safer at the expense of our civil liberties. Were they truly justified?

Maybe it's that I'm hating on The President since he's wealthier than me? I'm not intimidated or impressed by wealthy people without knowing how they put their money to use. It's easy for me to ignore his wealth. This may seem hard to believe because the majority of people wouldn't. For this same reason, when selling new cars it's in a car dealer's best interest to keep list prices high, because ultimately, they'll earn more money, and when you negotiate down, buyers think they're getting a good deal!

Or maybe I'm not optimistic enough? Should "It won't happen to me" be my new slogan? Individuals are naturally biased to thinking that they are less at risk of something bad happening to them compared to others. Smokers believe they are less likely to develop lung cancer than other smokers, traders believe they are less likely to lose money than their peers, and everyday people believe they are less at risk of being victimized in a crime. This also factors into matters of health, prompting individuals to neglect healthy behaviors like exercise, regular visits to the doctor, sharing this free e-book with as many people as possible and condom use.

Jose Franco

CHAPTER 1 - SELF MOTIVATED

Introduction

Seeing yourself having a balanced healthy lifestyle will go a long way in determining how long it will take to for it to become a realization. The clearer the vision, the easier it will be to create a plan to focus on the tasks needed to reach your goal. See yourself meditating, exercising and eating healthy everyday. See yourself being your natural weight. Envision yourself modeling healthy eating habits for your kids to emulate. Avoid having to take unnecessary medication. Understand the realities of work, leisure and family time. Create a realistic schedule in order to succeed even if it means thinking outside the box.

Regardless of person, most of us want the same thing; we want to be loved. We love music, our favorite sports teams, family, community, work and our faith. But do we love ourselves? Before we can truly love any of the latter we have to love ourselves and be

proactive in so doing. It starts by seeing ourselves living life in a healthy range in regards to diet and exercise. We all think about what we have to do to lead better lives, but do we have a plan? Can we visualize a plan? Where do you see yourself in 4 years in regards to health, weight and emotional state? How are you managing work, family and me time? As you seek answers for these questions keep in mind to be alive is to connect with all living things around you. Most of us have an abundance of love and good intentions we want to share with the world. Begin with yourself and a clear vision of the best you possible. Once this starts to become a self fulfilling prophecy a light will start to glow from within you. As you take care of this light your glow will gradually encompass the room you're in. All the people around you will start to fell the warmth emanating from you. Soon all those around you will see it too. In time it will spill over into the streets reaching all your friends, family, neighbors and coworkers. Soon everyone will be exposed to the better you. As you leave your house you'll be more in tuned with all living things around you. The trees, birds, plants and flowers will share the moment with you as you realize all living things are connected to the earth and share the same energy, love and good intentions the only difference is in terms of degrees. It all starts from within you and what you envision for yourself.

Gratitude

In 1998, I remember having dinner at my in-law's home. My wife and both our immediate families were also present. It was during the winter holidays and I just received my first professional bonus. As I sat next to my wife at the dinner table, I daydreamed of all the additional things I would be able to buy. I also began planning purchases with next years bonus, projected to be even larger. At that moment my wife whispered to me, "this is the richest we will ever be". Surprised, I asked her "what do you mean"? She replied, "They're all here, both our mothers, fathers, siblings and your grandmother, the only one of your grandparents alive in your lifetime is right here with us now". I was blown away how perceptive she was. I was so wrapped up daydreaming about money I wasn't aware of the treasures being in the moment offered me.

Be grateful of the things sometimes overlooked or taken for granted like our health, family, past achievements, relations and opportunities. Appreciate the small things. When was the last time you got excited just because you're able to walk? I've seen people who have lost both legs and become physically challenged while at the same time their will and outlook remain positive and intact. Have you ever start to dance because birds are singing by you? Go ahead, its alright to show your joy for life by busting a move while a bird sings. Lost your job? Change can seem scary but find the opportunity in the event. Utilize

the new found availability in your schedule to start or complete a project that is near and dear to your heart.

Be thankful for the opportunities afforded to you even in tragedy. Unforeseen events like injuries caused by accident, death of a loved one and financial loss are undesirable, but nonetheless a part of life. Our emotional state is tested in these instances and how we react during these trying times can shape our lives and health. Appreciate the fact we have a choice of how to react in these difficult times. One choice is to become an advocate and promote awareness of preventive measures to reduce the frequency of such tragedies in the future. As for health, people who have been injured or have experienced tragedy can also visualize themselves living a healthy lifestyle. Envision yourself exercising regularly and making healthy food choices taking into account physical limitations and checking with your doctor which activities to avoid. With the passage of each day, appreciate how your vision is crystallizing and your plan of action is plain to see and in so doing we begin with a mental picture of the desired end in mind.

Motivated and focused

Having a plan and being positive are essential for reaching our healthy lifestyle range. The next step is to continually stay motivated, focused on the daily execution of your plan. In the past, despite my best efforts, I had a hard time staying motivated. Prior to going to sleep I would say to myself I'll start tomorrow making healthy choices and go to a place I'll refer to as Healthy Town. (Dream sequence)

In the morning things change. I wake up in the back of a cab, full of negative thoughts and excuses not to do as planned. The cabbie looks at me and ask, where to? I don't say a word. After 5 minutes of silence, I exit the cab without the cab moving an inch. As I start to walk away from the taxi I tell myself, who cares life is random anyway. Would me taking the cab to Healthy Town really matter now that I know how things really are? So many terrible things happen to many undeserving people while others literally get away with murder. So why bother? I start to get hungry and want to get some breakfast. I walk into a diner, look at the menu embracing the randomness of life, order and eat a meal with no regards to nutrition, highly acidic and no attempt at moderation. After the meal, I feel awful, upset and disappointed.

Negative thoughts can be paralyzing and make you your own worst enemy. As I began to take notice of my thoughts and how I spoke, I realized how negative I was about most things. I was very judgmental and opinionated about things I've yet to try or experience. I also had no structure or strategy of how to reach my goal. I had no vision, no ideal or idea

what I had to do. I knew I wanted to lose weight but I couldn't articulate how? I felt powerless and somewhat depressed. Two months later, I caught a break. I got an email from my insurance company to renew my policy and the receptionist who sent it closed the email with a George Bernard Shaw quote:

"Some men see things as they are and say, why. I dream things that never were and say, why not.

In the weeks that followed I asked myself, why not be happy? Why not stop being judgmental? Why not stop being negative? Why not try new things? I also thought about my past and took responsibility for my poor choices and their consequences while embracing the lessons learned from these experiences. I owned my mistakes and acknowledged I enabled people to take advantage of me by not seeing what are now obvious flags or when obvious, not speaking up. My past insecurities prevented me from self reflecting and self regulating my behavior. I now know that the only things I can control are my actions and placing my hopes on the acts of others hoping they guess what I'm thinking or wishing for is foolish. Should I avoid certain people? No, be in the moment, don't waste your time judging others from afar instead engage with all people who come in contact with you. Focus on expressing yourself clearly and when not in agreement with an individual, respectfully disagree. If someone uses words to try to offend you remind yourself what was said is not what bothers you, but your opinion of what was said is what bothered you. You have control over your opinions, use patience and silence in such instances. I've learned to express my emotions in a constructive and positive way. Instead of saying "hell no" I opt for "no, thank you". Same outcome, less stress. Expressing my feelings in a constructive way regardless of my emotional state is ongoing work for me. I think that being in the moment, not being judgmental of others or myself is a good starting point.

Gradually, my confidence grew. I started thinking about my future and started to prioritize my time focusing on the things that are most important to me. I wanted to create a plan for myself which allowed me to make the most of my time with my family, work, friends and alone. I saw myself committing to a healthy lifestyle instead of a short term diet.

In April 2011 I set out to live in a way I could reach and maintain my natural weight range for my height (5"8) and frame of 175 - 180 pounds. We achieve our natural weight by eating in a healthy balanced way which makes your body feel nourished with the food you eat so you stop craving more. A married couple friends of mine (2006) had done a juice fast and ate raw vegan for 5 weeks and in the process lost 25 & 35 pounds respectively. Impressed by these results, I started eating raw vegan too in 2011. At first, I'd make green smoothies (kale, spinach, apple, banana). By day 10 I purchased a juicer (omega 8006) to reduce my

sugar and fiber intake. By juicing, 95% of all the nutrients in fruits and vegetables are in it's juice. By not having to digest the fibers, the nutrients in the juice work more efficiently.

Armed with a positive outlook I started to exercise too. I wanted an exercise routine I could do regardless of age. On prior occasions, I lost weight by running between 25 to 40 miles per week, only to see the weight return when I stopped running because of soreness, injury or laziness. I started walking a minimum of one hour in the morning and one hour after dinner. I decided to keep first things first as I envisioned my daily schedule. My health, family and work are my priorities. In order to get the walking in the morning, I changed my wake up time to 4:15am from 6am. All my other free time I spent with my family. My 5 minute commute from work makes dinner together possible more times than not. Everything and everyone else had to take a backseat. Today through daily meditation I free myself of all negative energy as I remind myself all things that I think are negative are not. The only thing that's negative is my opinion of things. I forgive those who in the past would've annoyed me and in situations I get annoyed, I forgive myself for not controlling my opinion. Tonight, prior to going to sleep, say to yourself, I will start or continue making balanced healthy choices by living according to your plan (Dream sequence)

I wake up in the back of a cab again, full of positive thoughts. I'm in the moment and understand this is a dream and I'm in control of it's outcome. I look at the rearview mirror and realize I'm also the cab driver. I give myself directions, arrive at my destination and exit the taxi. As I start to walk away from the taxi I ask myself, is life random? Yes it is! Why not make the most of the randomness of life by seizing every opportunity! Terrible things continue to happen to many undeserving people while others literally get away with murder. Though upsetting, these are things I can't control. I focus my energy on the things under my power by following through with my daily plan of healthy living offsetting some of the negative occurrences in the world. I have love for myself and love for all. I get hungry and have my morning green juice.

The 4 Year Plan

In four years I see myself in front of my house being my natural weight spending time with my wife, daughter, family and friends. I see myself continue to pleasantly surprising my wife with acts of kindness and chivalry on our 26th year of marriage. I will listen before talking and when I'm not sure of the meaning or significance of a topic I will ask for clarification regardless of how silly my question may seem to me. Professionally, I will manage Stoop Juice and let the quality of the fresh organic fruits and vegetables sell themselves. I will continuously seek to improve the customer's experience by expediting orders promptly while introducing additional quality vegan options namely a line of vegan ice creams with up

to 5 new flavors. I will continue to train, hire good people with positive attitudes who live close to store locations. I will continue to seek feedback and exchange stories with our regular and new customers. I will have one day off a week to share with my family, myself and friends. I will continue to add content to Stoop's blog with two purposes, 1. I want to create content I can use to keep me motivated and enhance my healthy quality of life. 2. I want to share this information with the rest of the world with the hope others find it useful. Financially, my wife and I will continue on schedule with our savings plan and make adjustments to remedy any unforeseen events.

I wrote my 4 year plan in a constructively skeptical manner taking into account the randomness of life and all it's uncertainties. Seek out opportunities that create a win-win situation that are inline with your vision of a healthy lifestyle. Communicate your needs as clearly as possible to get the most out of the opportunities you come across. Before trying to explain to people your vision of a healthy lifestyle, listen first to all the options each opportunity offers. Only look into opportunities inline with your healthy lifestyle. Below is an example of a lost opportunity because of poor communication:

There are two people in a kitchen. There is only one lime left and both of them want it. What would you expect as the solution? Compromise is one option. They might cut it in half and each gets half. Let's assume that's what they do. One person now goes to the juicer and starts squeezing herself 3 tablespoons lime juice realizing she needs 6 tablespoons for the drink being prepared. The other, with some difficulty, begins to grate the rind of the half lime to flavor a cake. Had they communicated their intended use of the lime both demands would've been easily met and created a win-win outcome.

In those instances opportunities present themselves that don't promote your healthy lifestyle; simply say no thank you and proceed. The faster you learn to identify and utilize opportunities inline with your healthy lifestyle, the sooner your vision will become reality. The best opportunities are the one's you create for yourself and have full control. For example, running is a wonderful way to exercise and teaming up with a person or a group would be inline with a healthy lifestyle. Creating a dependency on others to go running will reduce the number of opportunities you go running. Run with friends, but be ready to run by yourself if no one is available to run with you.

Daily Plan

My alarm rings at 4:15am to signal the start of my day. At 4:25am I start the 6 phase meditation (22 minutes)

1. Connection (See yourself for what we all are, a piece of consciousness directly connected to every other life form on the planet)

2. Gratitude (Know that when you express gratitude for beautiful moments in life, you open the way for these moments to repeat themselves and grow in terms of their magnitude)

3. Forgiveness (Know that at a deeper level we are one, and any negative charge towards any other living person is a charge against yourself)

4. Visualizing (As you wrap up, mentally tell yourself, let this or something better unfold in my life)

5. Daily Intention (Visualize yourself making today amazingly wonderful too)

6. Blessings (Know that you create your own luck and the universe has your back)

As I meditate my daily intentions, I visualize how my day is going to be from start to finish making sure my habits are inline with my 4 year plan. I visualize finishing my meditation, doing 150 sit-ups, getting dressed, selecting a playlist on my phone, go swimming at the 9th street Y for an hour, returning home, walking the dog, tending to my daughter, showering and getting dressed.

When school is in session I wake up my daughter after walking the dog, we both get ready for the day and have breakfast. On the ride to school my daughter and I will catch up free of smartphones or other electronic devices. After drop off, I walk to Stoop Juice, set up, have 32 ounces of green juice and open for business. I see myself enjoying conversation with new and regular customers, making juices, smoothies and acai bowls. When no one is in the shop and everything is setup I work on content for the Stoop blog, research new purchases like new counter refrigerator for organic vegan ice cream. I see myself doing time and motion studies with new product offering in order to make sure the new offerings can be prepared as promptly as possible. I envision my wife and I having our daily midday phone conversations to make sure we're on the same page regarding all things happening in our daughter's life. After work, I see myself having dinner, spend time with my wife and daughter, help my daughter with homework, going for my walk with the dog, shower get to bed and repeat the following morning.

The images of my routine while meditating daily motivates me, give me clarity, structure, keeps me focused on my goals, creating a mental blue print that rejuvenates my soul. I remind myself that I'm a spirit with a body not a body with a spirit. I can be what I will to be!

Faith

Out of the billions of people in the world the person I least trust is myself. I can walk away, ignore anybody with negative thoughts. When I have similar thoughts, I'm unable to walk away. Instead, my negative thoughts are self imposed barriers which prevent me from visualizing a plan to reach my goal. Back in 2011, I lost 70 pounds in 120 days after experiencing a paradigm shift in how I saw myself in relationship to external things. The realization I'll always be both my own best friend and worst enemy are with me everyday keeping me modest, humble and receptive to learning new things. My confidence comes from managing my internal uncertainties. My first step is to have a clear and defined vision of a healthy lifestyle with a focus on things I can control. Since I don't rely on externals, I seek to create new habits and continue to replace bad habits with new ones inline with my vision.

The Power of Habit by Charles Duhigg explains a simple three-step process that all habits follow. This cycle, known as The Habit Loop, says that each habit consists of…

The Trigger: the event that starts the habit.

The Routine: the behavior that you perform, the habit itself.

The Reward: the benefit that is associated with the behavior.

Each phase of the loop is important for building new habits, but the first factor: habit triggers is were self-motivation blossoms.

There are five primary ways that a new habit can be triggered. If you understand each of them, then you can select the right one for the particular habit that you are working on.

The 5 triggers are:

Trigger 1: Time

Trigger 2: Location

Trigger 3: Preceding Event

Trigger 4: Emotional State

Trigger 5: Other People

No matter what trigger you choose for your new habit, there is one important thing to understand. The key to choosing a successful trigger is to pick a trigger that is very specific and immediately actionable. For example, let's say you want to build a new habit of drinking a green juice every morning. You might start by choosing a time-based trigger and saying something like, "I'll drink 32 ounces of green juice in the morning." This might work, but it's not very specific. Do you drink your juice at the beginning of your morning? At the end? Any time?

Alternatively, you could create a trigger around a very specific preceding event that happens right around your morning. For example, "When I finish brushing my teeth, I'll drink my green juice." In this case, the very specific action of "brushing your teeth" is a perfect trigger for what to do next (drink your green juice). There is no mistaking when you should do the new habit.

As always, self-experimentation is the only real answer. Play around with these five habit triggers and see what help you realize your vision of a healthy lifestyle.

CHAPTER 2 - BASEBALL, BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY, REFLECTIONS

HISTORY

Business and baseball are in my DNA. Both have played an integral role throughout my life, teaching me the importance of an entrepreneurial mindset, the systems needed to carry out successful business endeavors and, in key ways, have filled the void created by my absent father. Through my life experiences—which have been multi-faceted and have served to inform my current life philosophy—I have cultivated principles of openness, seeking to understand operational constraints, creating value, and promoting profit over quality. I believe that—despite their diametric opposition—the principle of private property and the principle of need can be balanced in each of our lives if our goals are clearly defined and we have a realistic understanding of the possible outcomes. When considering the outlook I must adopt in order to be successful, I choose to lead a proactive rather than reactive life,

especially throughout the duration of the four-year plan I've created. This requires me to focus each day on staying motivated and building habits that are aligned with my desired quality of life.

Early Life & Unexpected Influences

Competitive baseball has four levels—beginner, novice, collegiate/travel, and professional—and from an early age my aim was to ascend through each one of them. My baseball journey began with an unexpected encounter in the spring of 1974 at age six when my family was living in the Mount Hope section of the Bronx. One day I had decided to take a walk to explore my neighborhood, despite knowing my mother would disapprove of me straying that far from home. I found myself on the steps of a nearby subway station and was approached by a tall middle-aged man who asked, "where are your parents?" Surprised by his approach, I told him about my unauthorized trip as he walked me back up the stairs. To put me at ease, he asked if I liked baseball. My response was that I was indifferent, which surprised him. The man walked me to his apartment building, went inside, and returned with a baseball glove. He gifted me the glove and told me to go home to my mother. When I

returned home, she was both relieved and upset, in addition to being curious about where the glove had come from. She and I walked to the man's building and, upon speaking with him, learned that he and my mother had something in common—they were both from the Dominican Republic. We also discovered something exciting—his name was Angel Rijos, and he was a former professional baseball player in the Dominican League in the 60's and early 70's. Inspired by this chance encounter, my interest in baseball grew.

High School Years & Baseball

Daily pickup softball games were a regular occurrence in the schoolyard across from my grandmother's apartment, and it was through these games that I learned to catch, hit and run the bases. It is also where I met my best friend Randy Rivera, and he and I spent most summer days practicing our batting skills and enjoying each other's company. Soon after, my mother, brother Rafael and I moved to another Bronx neighborhood where I played stickball against men much older and more experienced than I was. That same year, a friend invited me to play on the little league team his dad coached, and we finished our 11-game season with a 3-8 record. I continued to refine my skills by playing on organized teams with 30 or less scheduled game seasons until 1982.

By my sophomore year in high school, baseball consumed the vast majority of my time. I made the Dewitt Clinton high school varsity baseball team, while also playing on three outside teams and competing against kids as old as 19. While I enjoyed playing on these teams, I was ultimately searching for a greater challenge. A high school teammate, Pedro Borbon Jr., told me about Youth Service League, a travel baseball team that played in five different leagues and kept a rigorous game schedule. I was excited to learn that several individuals now playing Major League Baseball (MLB) (including Shawon Dunston, the number one pick of the 1982 Major League draft) had played with Youth Service League. Pedro had been invited to try out, and to bring someone he thought would make a good pitcher. He asked me to come. I made the team and was able to recruit Randy two weeks later. Soon after, I quit my high school team to commit fully to both of my travel teams. It was remarkably successful, and I was starting pitcher on the team of kids my age and I finished the season with a 15-1 record as a starting pitcher. I played outfield, first base, or designated hitter when I wasn't pitching. We won the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference tournament to qualify for the AABC Mickey Mantle World Series. On the second team, where I played with slightly older kids, I mostly acted as a relief pitcher and played left field. It was at a game with this team that I first saw a MLB scout. Two teammates—Luis De Los Santos and Albert Toledo—impressed the scouts and were both drafted in 1984.

That fall I rejoined my high school team, training hard to achieve my highest level of physical fitness, running my fastest 60-yard dash, maintaining a .630 batting average, and leading the team in every offensive category besides triples—stats I hoped would impress the scouts. In 1985, I watched as several local kids my age were recruited, including B.J. Surhuff, Tino Martinez, Clay Parrack and Barry Bonds. Pedro was also drafted in the 35th round but did not sign.

Encountering multiple MLB scouts on the Parade Grounds in Brooklyn became the norm during my Youth Service 17-18U games. These scouts wrote highly objective reports on players they considered prospects, and evaluated us as we ran a timed 60-yard dash, ran the bases, and threw from all outfield positions. Speed guns were used to time our throwing velocity from the pitcher's mound. The scouts compared our scores against the Major League averages. A point system from 2 to 8 (with 8 being outstanding) was utilized by the scouts, and since I had been actively working on my weaknesses to improve my chances of getting drafted, I graded myself accordingly at the end of my senior year:

- Hitting ability – 5
- Raw power – 4
- Power frequency – 4
- Running speed – 3
- Base running – 3
- Arm strength – 4
- Arm accuracy – 5
- Fielding – 3
- Range – 3
- Baseball instinct – 5

Pitching

- Fastball velocity – 4

- Fastball movement – 4
- Curve ball – 4
- Slider – 4
- Change up – 3
- Other pitch – 2
- Overall control – 5
- Command of pitches – 5
- Poise – 5
- Baseball instinct – 5

Non-physical Qualities

- Aggressiveness – 6
- Drive – 7
- Self-confidence – 7
- Mental toughness – 8
- Pressure player – 7
- Courage – 7
- Dedication – 8
- Coach-ability – 5
- Work habits - 5
- Off-the-field habits - 7

I was disappointed when I was not drafted straight out of high school, but not surprised. I started thinking about college, and realized I had some tough choices to make. I learned that the 1985 Iona College baseball team led division 1 baseball in hitting (the team batting average was .330). I applied and was accepted into Iona College through the Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP). As a HEOP prerequisite, all freshman had to attend summer school, which would not have allowed me to do summer baseball. I decided to leave Youth Service and attend Iona with the hopes of making the baseball team. Many of my teammates would go on to play professional baseball—Joel Chimelis, Ernesto Castro, Alex Arias, Benny Castillo, Rafael Novoa, Jose Rubiera, Pedro Borbon Jr., and Randy Rivera.

Business

At the same time that I was developing my athletic skills, I was learning about my family's history and relationship to the world of business. I come from a family of merchants. My mother, Maritza Santiago, was born in San Pedro De Macoris in 1947 and, shortly after her second birthday, her father died from complications related to a tooth infection. His death forced my grandmother to leave her job and seek out a higher paying position in Santo Domingo to provide for her children. Since my grandmother was only able to return from the capital every few months, my mother was raised by my great grandmother, Colasa Reyes Astacio. My mother adored and admired her grandmother. Colasa was born in the countryside five miles outside of San Pedro in 1896. She grew up managing her family's farm—growing crops and raising livestock to be transported to San Pedro's market to sell. In 1919 my grandmother married Julio Astacio and they began a family. Colasa insisted on buying a house in San Pedro to be close to the market and the best schools for their children. It was this choice to move into an urban environment that allowed my family to shift away from sustaining themselves within an agrarian society.

In agrarian or pre-industrial times, my family members mainly needed "know-how" knowledge—which they learned by participating in everyday life and working on the land—and no formal education was required. By contrast, in the 20th Century industrial age people were required to be able to think more abstractly, and schools were set up to deliver this kind of knowledge to students.

Besides my grandmother who was the second oldest, my great grandmother had four other children. Frank and Caridad Astascio, the two youngest, would go on to college in the United States in the 1950s-60s and become my god parents. My mother did not attend college but took accounting in high school—a skill she applied while working at a textile shop in San Pedro when she was 16. While assisting with bookkeeping, she also attended to

customers in the showroom and was able to help salespeople negotiate with them based on her knowledge of math and pricing markups.

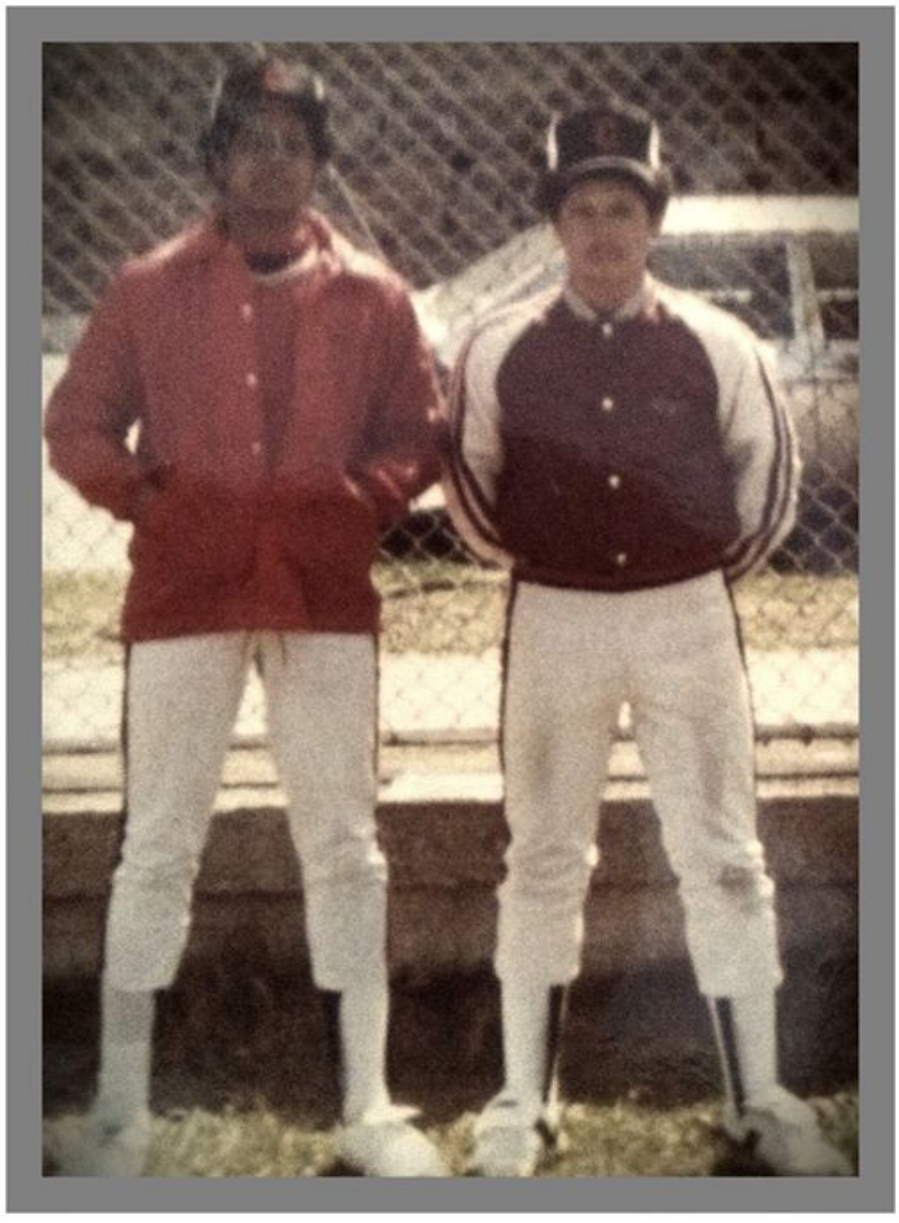
When my immediate family moved to New York, my mother continued to use this skill to purchase bed linens from a local warehouse and sell them in the laundromat to make extra money while doing our laundry. During the day she worked as a seamstress in the garment district, teaching herself how to operate every machine at her job to make herself an indispensable employee. My mother was paid according to the number of units she completed, and she focused on using the machines that paid the highest rates. One such machine was the finishing machine, which only my mother and one other person knew how to operate. Since we had a finishing machine in our home, she would often complete projects there which would get picked up at the end of the day. My mother would collect cash in exchange for the finished items. On one such occasion, the man picking up the pieces offered my mother the option of $75 cash or an assortment of 50 dresses as payment. I told my mother she'd be better off taking the dresses and selling them than taking the cash. She replied, "I'll take the dresses if you sell them and make more than $75." Within an hour I was selling the dresses to people in my neighborhood. I sold the first batch in 15 minutes for $21. Within the next two hours I sold all but six dresses for $107. This was the moment I became aware I had a keen business sense, and the skill to put my instincts into action.

I also served as my mother's assistant and interpreter (since English was not her first language). She organized a "sociedads" (societies) of up to 10 coworkers, each paying $100/week for 10 weeks for the right to a one-time payout of $1,000 within 10 weeks. No interest was charged in my mother's sociedads, and this type of group allowed participants to build community and gain access to larger amounts of money faster.

At age 12 I recognized an opportunity when it was offered to me, and was successful in selling fireworks. The individual selling fireworks at the lowest prices in my neighborhood had a day job and could only sell after 7pm. I bought as much as I could afford from him to sell during the day at the market rate, and in time he came to trust me and extended me larger quantities of fireworks. I increased my profits by selling a higher volume to customers at lower prices. I saved most of my profits by imitating my brother Rafael, who kept most of his money in a locked desk in our bedroom.

Rather than play baseball like me, Rafael would work as a counselor or tutor at various schools. When he was 14, he obtained his working permit from the New York Department of Labor. His savings came from his salary and money he received as gifts. Rafael sold Amway products as a junior in high school and, on the weekends wearing suits and ties, he

and his associates would solicit service workers in their workplace to join Amway. They targeted people working service jobs in department stores, and were frequently escorted out of the buildings by security guards. I was never asked to join Amway because I had many questions, and I had overheard him listening to his Amway training cassettes at night instructing him and other trainees to deflect away any questions that exposed Amway's shortcomings.



A high school teammate, Pedro Borbon Jr., told me about Youth Service League, a travel baseball team that played in five different leagues and kept a rigorous game schedule. I was excited to learn that several individuals now playing Major League Baseball (including Shawon Dunston, the number one pick of the 1982 Major League draft) had played with Youth Service League. Pedro had been invited to try out, and to bring someone he thought would make a good pitcher. - 1983

After High School

Despite earning a 3.5 GPA in summer school, I dropped out of college after my first semester due to lack of motivation or long-term vision. I did not want to misspend my Tuition Assistance Program award. In January 1986, my financial aid advisor at Iona informed me I would receive a $5,800 refund check from the school since I would not be attending the spring semester. Within one month I had spent all of the money, the majority of it having gone towards a car. I obtained a job at Defender, Inc. selling boating supplies and paid for gas, insurance and rent with these earnings.

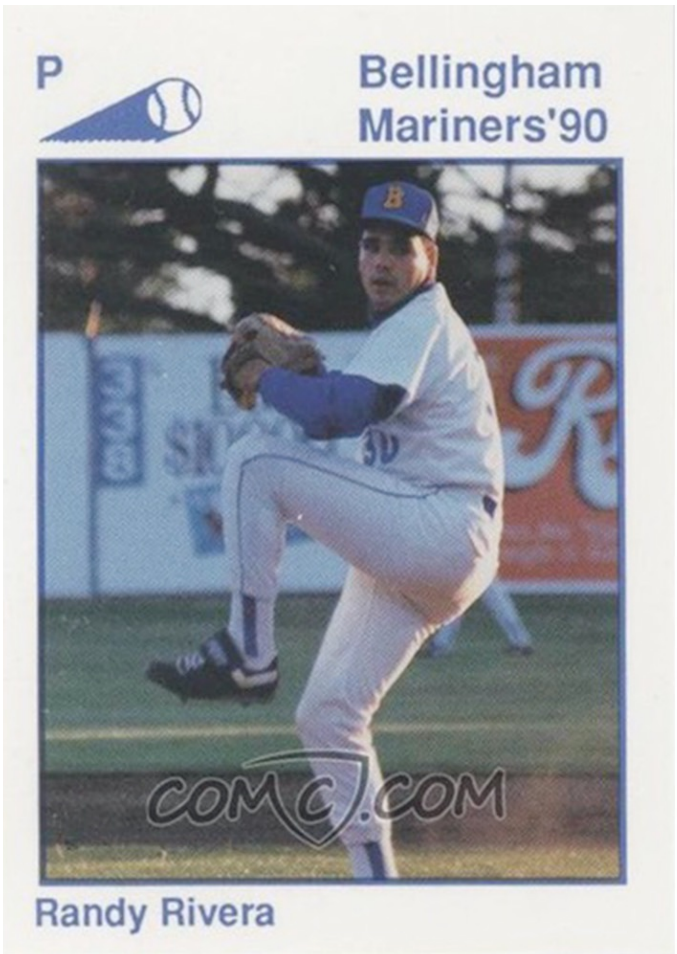
The following semester Rafael dropped out of college too, then worked a slew of jobs such as doorman, dishwasher, and car and vacuum cleaner salesman. I eventually stopped working at Defender, Inc. and spent most of my time with friends. Over time I had to sell my car to pay for living expenses. In the spring of 1987 I decided to go back to work for a financial printing firm in Manhattan, but lost the job shortly after "Black Monday," (October 19, 1987) when stock markets around the world crashed, shedding huge value over a short period of time.

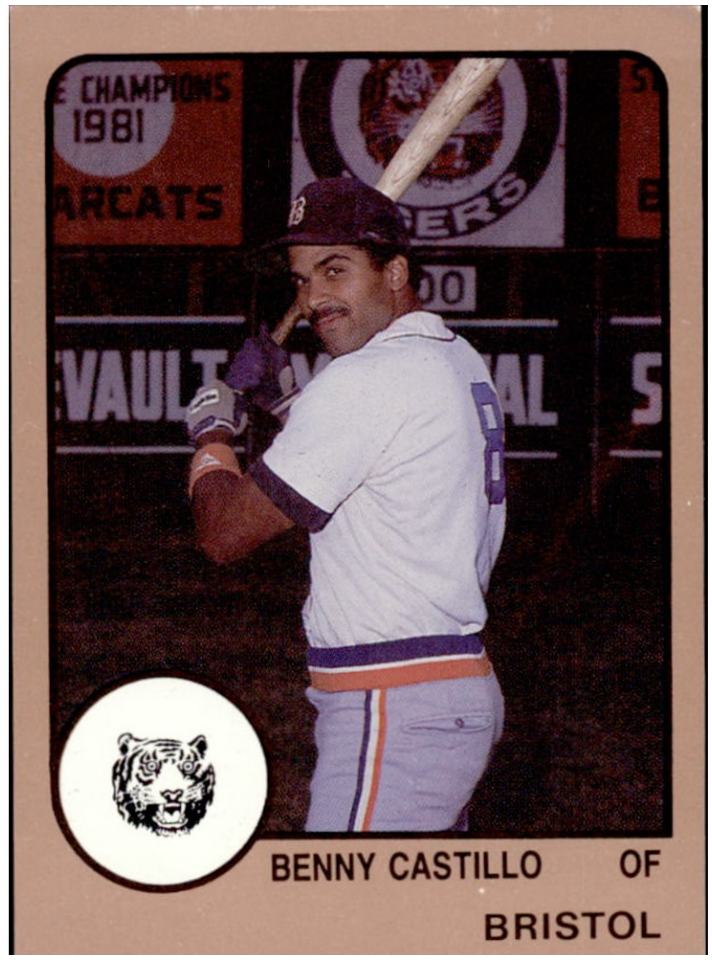
During this time period Pedro Borbon, Jr. was drafted by the Los Angeles Dodgers but did not sign. After the draft Pedro and I spoke, and he told me that he was discovered by a staff member at high school. The staff member had noticed his ID card and asked if he was related to Pedro Borbon, the Major League pitcher. Pedro replied, "yes, he's my dad." Pedro quickly made the varsity team. I am in awe of what he accomplished on the baseball field, and off the field he has impressed me even more through self reliance. In 1980, the Saint Louis Cardinals released Pedro Borbon, Sr. and, instead of returning to the Dominican Republic, he settled in with another family he had started in Texas. This was upsetting to Pedro Jr., who then chose to move to the Bronx at age 14 to live with his uncle. Unfortunately, Pedro Jr.'s uncle was unable to provide for him and he immediately went to work to support himself. Later on, Pedro Jr. would attend junior college with Randy Rivera.

Randy was recruited to play baseball for Oklahoma State University in 1987, where he joined Youth Service's Benny Castillo and future major leaguers Robin Ventura and Jeremy Burnitz. Randy's success was ultimately due to his ability to visualize himself succeeding, in addition to hard work. He would tell me he'd get motivated when players he had success against made it to the Major Leagues saying, "if the guys I've pitched against made it to the big leagues, some team will notice me, too." On August 29, 1989 the Atlanta Braves signed Pedro Borbon Jr., and in the summer of 1990 the Seattle Mariners signed Randy Rivera.

Randy is my best friend, although there have been times when the relationship has been tested. Despite coping with Alzheimer's disease, Randy's mother continued to love to cook. On one occasion she made me a full breakfast and, despite knowing of her illness, I allowed her to cook me a second breakfast right afterwards knowing everyone in the apartment had already eaten. Randy walked in as I was eating the second breakfast and informed her that she had inadvertently made me breakfast twice. I giggled in the background while Randy was openly upset with me. On another occasion, after his mother's Alzheimer's had advanced and required her to live in an assisted care facility, Randy told me he had found pictures in his dad's pocket of another woman wearing lingerie. Instead of being sensitive to my friend's feelings I said, "She's hot! Your dad's the man!" Randy called me a fool and

stopped speaking to me for a few hours until I apologized and stopped asking him if I could keep the pictures.



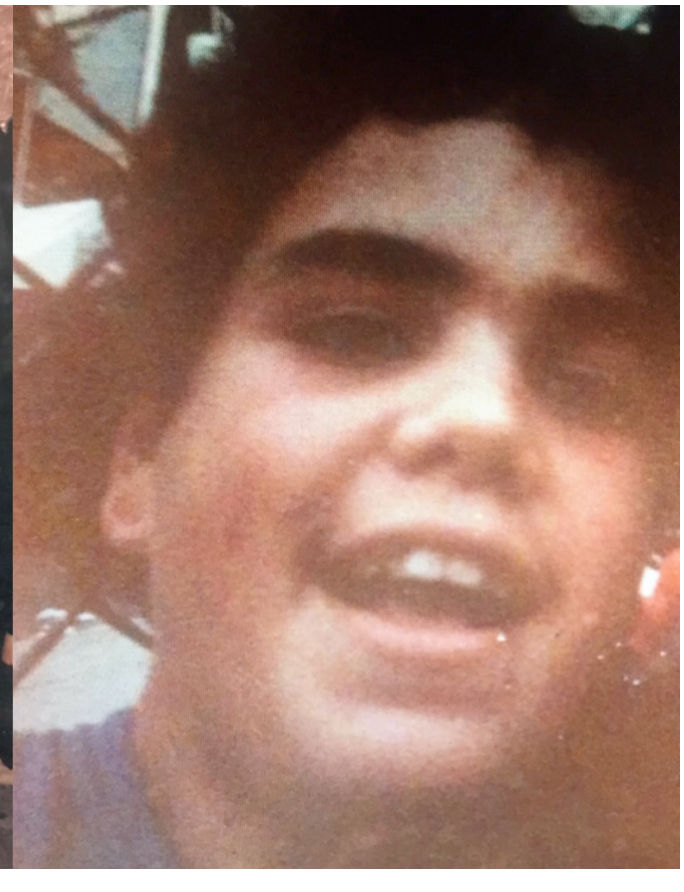


Three years after quitting Iona College, I moved back in with my mother. Rafael was now the favored child, as he had returned to school to study accounting. His roommates, all of whom had salaried careers, had shown him solutions to his perceived obstacles to going back to school, and had cited moving back home with our mother as a way to stay housed while getting his degree. Rafael maintained a 4.0 grade point average his first semester by micromanaging his time. He avoided all people and distractions not congruent with his school work—including me. He did not have time for nonsense and had nothing in common with me, my lifestyle or the company I kept.

Informed by a false sense of entitlement and looking to avoid work, I tried to broker "sociedad" groups where I viewed my peer's lack of reputation as an opportunity to charge them interest and profit monetarily. These efforts ultimately failed, as all deals ended with people making late payments and eventually disappearing. At one point my friend Charlie needed money to increase the inventory of his garment business and, despite my mother and her friends warning me that Charlie's business plan was flawed and destined to fail, I lent him $1,000. I told him it was sociedad's money (although it was actually mine) and charged him 20% interest. He paid me back a few installments but then disappeared. I finally tracked him down. He said he would not be able to pay me back but would "take care of" anyone who was harassing me about the money. This was when I realized I would have

to use violence, threats and intimidation to get money back from these types of deals—characteristics which are not in my nature. Depressed, I spent my days at home watching television and raiding my mother's refrigerator to see my weight reach 253 pounds. While I made use of my time reading and grasping the material in Rafael's business text books, not much was happening.

One night my reading was interrupted by a call from Randy. He was in Washington state playing short season A ball with the Bellingham Mariners, and urged me to come visit him since he was unable to come back to New York that summer and was also worried about my quality or life and safety. Our Washington Heights neighborhood was rapidly changing—and not for the better. I declined to visit him, but had also been taking note that crime and violence were escalating, largely due the area providing drug dealers easy access to both New Jersey and upstate New York. In 1990 the 34th Precinct reported a total of 10,027 crimes in just over three square miles, and 103 of them were murders. 19 of those murders were people who had played baseball with Randy and I when we were younger. Police had raided a friend of a friend (Max) post-baseball game event and found weapons, money and drugs stashed in his apartment. For obvious reasons, no one rushed to claim ownership of the drugs but everyone at the event was arrested and handcuffed. Paranoid from then onwards, Max patted me down when I came to his apartment soon afterwards to make sure I was not wearing a police wire. Scared, I stopped spending time uptown and began hanging out in the Village by myself. During Christmas season I jumped on the New York Giants bandwagon all the way to Super Bowl XXV &, to my delight, on Jan 27, 1991 they beat the Buffalo Bills 20 - 19. Sadly, Randy & 2 other young men died in a car crash (same day).



Back to College and Life After Randy's Death

Randy's death devastated me. I took long walks where I cried, cursed, and cried again. I tried bargaining with God. At home, I had nobody to talk to since Rafael had transferred to SUNY Albany. Given everything that had happened, I started to feel motivated to get my life in order. In the fall of 1991 I decided to return to school at Monroe College—this time envisioning myself looking sharp and successful, and often finishing my class assignments ahead of time. Small class sizes helped me derive a great deal of meaning from the material, and my teachers appreciated my interest and class participation (but often had to stop me from monopolizing the lessons—that's how excited I was).

I took a variety of classes, including sociology. My first week in class I remember a lesson on self-fulfilling prophecy. The teacher gave an interesting example of this, which was "a person who goes on the subway or streets begging for money and faking a mental illness does it for the money without consequence. As the days turn to months the mental illness act takes up more of the beggar's time, slowly shifting their sense of reality." In the end, the person will stop being able to separate the act from reality and real mental illness will set in. An idea occurred to me. I asked, "Can the same thing happen for someone who wants to do something good? For example, I dress up to come to school because I see myself as a business manager and owner already. I ignore my lack of experience and visualize all the case studies in my business law books as my reality. Despite my inexperience, I see myself working smart, graduating, being successful and running my own business." My teachers smiled and said, "the only thing you are leaving out is that you're going to drive all the girls crazy. I see your future as a wonderful journey, enjoy the ride." With this encouragement, I read all 36 chapters in my sociology book within the next six days. My relationship with my mother was rapidly improving as the sociology text drew attention to how generous, wise, selfless and exceptional she was—especially considering her life circumstances (my books indicated that formerly married women as compared to married women are more likely to feel unhappy, suffer from fear of being alone, have low self-esteem, and lack confidence). I began to see my mother as an individual and spent time reflecting on her life journey instead of taking her for granted.

In 1992 I transferred to Binghamton University's School of Management. I was receiving social services and food stamps at this time to support myself, and also started two businesses with the use of financial aid money (I'd applied for the maximum amount of student loans while also living as frugally as possible). Years back when I'd used my student loan money from Iona College to buy the $5,000 car, I had been able to sell it for the same amount 18 months later. It was through this transaction that I'd identified an opportunity to

start a business. There were a number of independent car dealers I knew well who would sell me cars "as is" at a wholesale cost plus a $200 fee. "As is" means there is no guarantee of the quality of the car. I would attend wholesale auctions, bid and purchase cars I was interested in and bring back the cars with temporary plates issued by the wholesale dealer. I'd purchase moderately priced cars that appealed to students and sell them for an amount no greater than the average financial aid check. I struck deals with customers to add an additional 15 days to the state's lemon law warranty, and extended miles-based warranties from 90 days to 120 days. I also sold jewelry through my former co-worker from Defender Boating Supplies, Greg W. Greg's cousin had founded Michael Anthony Jewelers, which at the time was the largest gold jewelry manufacturer in the country. I'd distribute Michael Anthony's gold jewelry catalog to five associates who sold jewelry in their places of employment, and consolidate their orders into one weekly order.

That same year, the Atlanta Braves played the Cleveland Indians for the World Series. I watched in disbelief as Pedro Jr. pitched one important inning. The Braves were leading two games to one over the Indians, and were leading the fourth game going into the ninth inning. Braves closer Mark Wohlers was exhausted and shaky after pitching more than two innings the previous day, and he allowed the Indians to score a run and put a runner on second in that ninth inning with zero outs. Pedro Jr. came in to relieve Wohlers, and promptly struck Jim Thome and Sandy Almoar Jr. out, while getting Kenny Lofton to fly out to right. I celebrated as though it had been me pitching in that World Series. It assured me that dreams do come true.

Present Day/The Real World

Throughout my years in the business world I have developed a keen sense of strategy. As of 2019, I have worked for five separate companies using the same strategic system and principles with mixed results. I would compare each company's pricing to that of competitors, service, customer experience, finance and order fulfillment time. I would listen to the customer to assess how to grow their business and make proposals when I determined what they wanted. I would highlight the products and services that gave my company a competitive advantage. If I was unfamiliar with the details of a given deal, I would conduct research to gauge how or if to proceed.

My first job after college graduation was as an admissions representative for a business school, and it paid $20,000 more than any other job I'd applied to. The classified ad for this position called for 10 years of experience, and the interview was conducted in a conference room by the presidents of the school. All 15 applicants were interviewed at the same time. When asked why they should hire me I replied, "I noticed that the TV ads for the school tell

potential students to call today to begin a wonderful business career. I also see the actors wearing business suits in a professional work environment as the courses are described. I could not only sell these courses but also teach them, since the material is the same as I recently covered in business school. When a potential student walks into my office, they will see me—the finished product. I can close the deal because I can relate to sitting on a sofa watching TV before deciding to call and make an appointment." My pitch worked. I was offered the position that same day, and was highly successful in my work. During my six-month tenure at the school, I earned two pay increases and enrolled an average of 60% of all students as a member of a team of five representatives.

After leaving the admissions position I was offered a 10% raise to work as a salesman/ assistant selling jewelry for Michael Anthony—a job that allowed me to travel regularly to all 50 states. I left Michael Anthony after the two Vice Presidents of wholesale who supervised me also resigned. From there I took a position of Sales Director for S&R Chain wholesale jewelry in New York's diamond district, and one year later started my own non-competing wholesale jewelry company online. I worked for S&R Chain for six years until I was fired in 2004. Weeks later I was offered a sales position at another jewelry wholesaler under the condition that I sign a two-year non-compete contract. Within a year I was fired from that job too, but I realized what my mistake had been. In both situations, I had been trying to play the part of a manager instead of a salesman. I blame myself for not having the courage to leave when I did not agree with what the company was offering and their position in the market. Fortunately, my online jewelry business was profitable enough for me to work full time. I exchanged the security of a steady paycheck for my own autonomy and the freedom to set my own schedule.

I wondered how my job-hopping experience compared to those of my peers. I asked three individuals I know, who have worked for the same companies for 20 years or more, to provide feedback on how they have been able to go against the job-hopping trend. How you see yourself in relationship to external things goes a long way to shaping your perception and reality. The following are their responses.

Contact #1 – Maria L.

Maria L. has worked for a prestigious marketing company and is currently a vice president with a salary of over $200,000. In response to my question she replied, "Ha, I think it is fear…I read something recently which confirmed my risk averse side. Also, being raised by an FDNY father who has the perspective that your employer takes care of you for life. I wish! I have a high tolerance for pain I think. Moving to another ad agency…No, always felt like the grass is NOT greener. Starting my own business = scary."

Contact #2 – Rafael (brother)

Rafael has worked for a private real estate company owned by a family listed in Forbes' top 50 richest families. He has worked and done close to every job in the accounting department he helps manage. Rafael explained, "It's the norm for potential hires to give me resumes with a pattern of leaving jobs usually within two years. It's up to us to challenge and evaluate employees' performance during the first three months to see if we have a keeper. After the three months, it's one day at a time. The biggest obstacle for people who do not advance in my company is an unwillingness to do the work of new positions and prove competency before securing title and pay associated with the position. The most important habit that has helped me is that I'm always "sharpening my saw." I stay current on all the accounting laws and look for opportunities to go the extra mile. Let me give you an example. We hired a consulting firm to help us transition into a new accounting system for next year. I took it upon myself to look at instructional videos online of companies who have made the transition using the same consultant and have one or more years running. In these videos, knowing what I know about our present system, I noticed a filing procedure, if on this calendar year instead of next, would save us millions of dollars in tax liabilities. When I approached my Vice President she had reservations of my claim since I was talking about an unimplemented system. I asked her to conference call the consultants to verify the accuracy of my statement and if she'd like, I'd sit in the call. As it turned out, I was correct and my Vice President allowed me to present my proposal to the board"

Contact #3 – Gary M.

Gary M. has worked for a high-profile, publicly traded multi-national manufacturing agency for 22 years. He credits his bullheadedness and ability to challenge himself when opportunities are presented as keys to his success. When I asked him what he thought about today's candidates, he stated, "I had a three-hour conversation with one of my engineers who recently quit about this same issue. The reason people jump from job to job is a lack of opportunity to reinvent themselves. It takes work and self-reflection to admit a flawed or misaligned approach to work. The effort, need and perspective you have at a job changes as your living situation changes. A resume is a piece of paper, packaged to highlight what applicants consider his or her strengths to new employers and carries no history. By history, I mean it doesn't show potential employers the tendencies of an applicant, their ability to communicate, and past judgments. Reinventing yourself and self-reflection at a current job may be difficult for some since a flawed approach may reveal itself. Most resumes I see with short stays at many companies usually end up in the garbage."

My friend Gary has always had a clearly defined career path since his freshman year of college. Gary is the exception not the norm, most of us are searching for a philosophy that's a reflection of the ideal person we seek to be. Below is the philosophy I strive to live up to.

Encourage Openness

Openness begins with the ability to self-critique and reflect upon things central to one's own beliefs, thoughts, actions, behavior, and results. Openness can inform private, personal or group discussions. I learned an important lesson my junior year of high school that juggling too many things at once leads to underperformance—I'd spread myself too thin playing for multiple baseball teams and had my playing time reduced with the high school team I'd under-prioritized in favor of a travel team. After reflecting upon this, I gained key insights for questions to ask of myself to gauge the effectiveness of an effort. Today, when underperforming vendors ask why I no longer order from them, I tell them this baseball story and ask them, "what would you have done?" and "how do you think you're performing in comparison to other vendors?" I listen as they answer both questions, and value their insights. Very often, the candor expressed through my baseball story promotes an open dialogue that creates opportunities for our businesses to grow.

On one occasion, a gentleman walked into my shop and ordered a green juice. His demeanor seemed troubled, and I decided to strike up a conversation with him. He sighed as I asked, "do you know what agape is? It means universal love in Greek. It is the highest form of love —of God for man, and man for God." Now feeling comfortable, the man told me about a business deal gone wrong between he and his brother—a deal in which he had gone against his better judgement based on trying to please their mother. I asked how often he thinks about this and feels upset, to which he replied, "every day." I told him that he is perpetuating his own feelings due to not being willing to forgive his brother, and suggested he consider it in order to free himself of this burden. He smiled and said he agreed, but that it was easier said than done. He left the store in better spirits, and also made me think about a phrase in my mission statement—"I'll follow my own advice before giving advice to others." As I was meditating over the next few days, I contemplated which family member I may be holding a grudge against. My father came to mind.

My father and I share the same name, Jose Franco. He and my mother met in Puerto Rico in 1964 in the hospital after my grandmother was in a car accident (my dad was a friend of my uncle Cesar who was visiting my grandmother, and my mother had arrived from the Dominican Republic to help my grandmother recover). The two fell in love and married within a year. My dad's eldest brother inherited my grandfather's house, took out an equity loan, and paid my aunt and dad their share of the inheritance. According to my mother, once

he received this money my father quit his job, frequently drank alcohol, and stayed out late. Unwilling to put up with this behavior, my mother took my older brother (who was 8 months old at the time) and returned to my great grandmother's house in the Dominican Republic. She quickly realized she was pregnant with me, and returned to Puerto Rico six months later. My father's erratic behavior continued and my mother, who had no support there, left him for good to live in New York City on the Upper West Side. In 1973 my father traveled to see us in an attempt to get back together with my mother, but was ultimately unsuccessful and returned to Puerto Rico in 1975. He was never part of my daily life again, and my mother divorced him shortly thereafter. Though he never supported my brother or I afterwards, my mother never badmouthed him. I would see my father again eight years later when I participated in a baseball tournament in Puerto Rico and he showed up. 15 years later, I saw my dad when I introduced him to my wife and mother-in-law while in Puerto Rico for my wife's cousin's wedding. In 2010 I took my daughter to Puerto Rico when she asked to meet her grandfather. I gave him my phone number and he called a few times, which made me happy. Sadly, in the calls he made after that he was drunk, ranted, and made no sense. I hung up and did not immediately pick up when he called back.

Despite all of this, when the customer exited my shop I followed my own advice and called my dad on Father's Day. I could hear the joy in his frail voice. We had both lost over 75 pounds since our last meeting (me through a vegan lifestyle and him as a side effect of prostate cancer). I told my mother about the call and she then immediately called him. Over the next few weeks she spoke to my dad regularly and asked Rafael and I to do the same. He passed away six weeks after the only time I had wished him happy Father's Day. I did not expect to be as sad about his passing as I was. Despite our sad narrative, I still felt a connection. Since my father never remarried, I was the next of kin and signed off on his funeral arrangements.

Understand Operational Constraints

In 2009 I was asked to help coach a 15U travel baseball team in Parade Grounds (Brooklyn NY 10 minute walk from my Park Slope neighborhood) halfway through the season (with the help of the previous coach who had stayed on as an assistant). The team had many talented athletes, but most lacked discipline. Prior to my first game as head coach, I met with players and their parents to introduce myself and review my system which addressed the importance of punctuality, respect for the game, and the consequences of not following rules. I organized game lineups based on arrival time and required those who were late to run extra sprints. We won the first game and every player showed up on time for the next one. The 2009 group's biggest constraint was that I didn't put the group together making

past promises by the original coaches unrealistic under my style of leadership. Despite the team winning 40 out of 45 games I coached, only three of the 20 players returned to play for me the following year.

I did not fault them for this since I was imposed upon them by the organization's president, and the 17 who left were unable to grasp how I handled team tryouts. My system called for continuous tryouts throughout the season to discourage complacency, and all playing time was earned based on merit and ability. In the next season, 2010, my biggest constraint was filling an additional 12-14 team slots with players willing to play on a merit-based system team. My system is what I think are the most effective techniques to teach the game of baseball the right way while modeling constructive behavior and teaching useful life skills with universal application.

For instance, my three-step system for identifying constraints on the team. First step I'd identify the team's weakest link. I would assess whether I was working as efficiently as I could and what was getting in my way while also taking into account intangible factors like ineffective communication, restrictive team policies, double standards, or poor team morale. During tryouts I would meet with each player and explain the role I envisioned for them. If they disagreed they would opt to play elsewhere, and those who were talented enough and agreed to their roles made the team. As the season progressed if a player had second thoughts about their assigned role, I would remind them how important their role is to the overall team. Instead of wining, I'd ask them if they completed preparation drills designed to help players perform to the best of their abilities. One exception happened in Florida during a tournament, where a parent complained about his child's playing time. I encouraged him to ask his son what he agreed to in regards to his team role, and the parent got upset enough to complain to the organization's director. However, the director took my side and 15 minutes later the child quit the team and they checked out of the motel at 1am. Upon reflection, I could have done a better job of listening to the dad's concerns. Today I would take the same position but be more aware of my tone, demeanor, and body language while expressing myself.

In 2010 the baseball team I coached played over 135 games with a winning percentage of 83%. We won several important 16U tournaments and finished second in three regional 18U tournaments. Rebuilding the team was a challenge, but ultimately produced the results I desired.

I recognized the need to rebuild some components of my professional life as well. I saw parallels between my career in jewelry sales and the 2009 baseball team I coached for half a season. Despite a winning record, I was unable to keep the team together because I did not have a hand in the selection process. I had experienced the most joy from the 2010 baseball team I assembled from scratch. In terms of jewelry, my business remained profitable because my inventory appreciated in value by 40% to 50% to 75%. The issue was that customers could not justify buying a bracelet they priced a year earlier for 40% more, while at the same time a giant screen television that was $2,000 was now $900 and less expensive than the bracelet. This phenomenon affected my entire business and I had to act fast since my inventory was 90% gold jewelry. I made the decision to quit the jewelry business. After briefly considering but deciding against starting a full-time for-profit baseball camp, I started a business I was very passionate about called Stoop Juice, in 2012. Back in 2011, I lost 70 pounds in 120 days after experiencing a paradigm shift in how I saw myself in relation to external things. My realization that I will always be both my own best friend and worst enemy every day, which keeps me modest, humble, and receptive to learning new things. My confidence comes from managing my internal uncertainties while offering value to my customers.

Creating Synergy Through Value Construction

A sustainable baseball organization is also a business and, despite not executing on a baseball camp idea, below are the bullet point business plays for any individual looking to pursue this idea.

- Offer your members the best value line of baseball gear, equipment or other tangible items. The offering must be in line with the preparation routine for improvement of playing performance.

- Services should be provided by individuals who align philosophically and reflect the values of your organization.

- Remain relevant in the marketplace and create a competitive advantage by exceeding customer expectation and offering only the highest quality items.

- Staff members should be paid when they exercise the option of working during scheduled hours. These hours are usually mandatory and are dependent upon weather, duration of the game, practice, travel time. Staff must be dependable and punctual.

- What are your unit costs? How are you managing inventory and carrying cost? Services such as baseball lessons, instructions and consultations can be offered for a fee (and in creative forms like a subscription-based model that creates value for the customer, or a gift certificate that offers increments of lessons for a fee with an expiration date).

- If you lack a budget for new staff, create partnerships with instructors and coaches by marketing their services. Charge instructors a finder's fee to get the attention of people in their baseball community, then sell access in the form of advertising to another business looking to reach that audience.

- Audit all subscription expenses, noting whether they help the organization to be more profitable. Eliminate or reduce expenses not in line with profits.

- Purchase an appropriate insurance policy to minimize exposure to lawsuits.

- Subscribe to credible content, services, blogs, and publications to remain current with trends in baseball.

- Research requirements and speak to professionals about this subject (attorneys, insurance consultants, etc.)

Profit Over Quality

The noblest and most sustainable businesses must provide high value to its customers to survive, while also bringing in at least the same amount it spends per day. My dream job would be as general manager of the New York Yankees, and I am in agreement with how the organization handled Alex Rodriguez—an exceptional baseball player whose consistency produced results on the field and helped them win the 2009 World Series—when they suspended him for lying about using performance enhancing drugs. The suspension disappointed many fans and his integrity was called into question, and many wanted the Yankees to get rid of him permanently. Upon his return in 2015, however, Rodriguez had an extremely successful season. While at that point Rodriguez was the Yankees' best option in the designated hitter position, Alex's guaranteed $27 million contract was considered a fixed cost since it did not change regardless of changes in his performance. However, as time went on and management determined that other players on the roster were better options to help the team win, Rodriguez's salary was viewed as a sunk cost. In 2016, while batting below average, the Yankees released Rodriguez and the following day promoted two position players to the active roster.

United States-based banks also emphasize profit over quality. The top three banks' initial capital derived from private business—Joseph Morgan (J.P. Morgan Chase) owned a stage coach business, Amadeo Peter Gianni (Bank of America) was part owner of a wholesale produce company, and Henry Wells and William Fargo owned a courier business that competed with the Pony Express. These businesses transitioned into banks when their industries became obsolete or their operations were more profitable providing financial services. Banks utilize their business acumen and knowledge of financial principles to determine the risk of granting a loan to a small business. Despite my twenty-year personal banking relationship with one of the above-mentioned banks, I was denied a loan to start Stoop Juice. My loan officer determined that my inexperience in food service and the high rate of failed businesses in the competitive food service market doomed me as a professional. He said if I created a viable business for three or more years he could assist me in securing a loan. Although I was upset, I remembered back to why "sociedad" had rejected my friend Charlie's loan because he had only been in the garment district for less than one year. In the bank's eyes, I was no different than Charlie.

Principle of Private Property vs. Principle of Need

The heart of an economic system is its principle of distribution. Real wealth is goods and services. Its production takes place in the physical world under natural laws that are everywhere the same. Regardless of an economy's political structure, production problems must be solved pragmatically through science, engineering, technology, management, and the skills of labor. Out of the production process, however, arises wealth or income, and distribution of this wealth or income involves problems of a different order. There is a political dimension to distribution as well as a physical one. Its character is derived from the economy's principle of distribution.

Upon the choice of distributive principle turns, for good or ill, an economy's ethical, motivational, and even engineering characteristics. In the long run, the distributive principle will control the quality of life obtainable in the society—not only material abundance or lack of abundance, but also such intangibles as the presence or absence and degree of personal freedom, justice, leisure, autonomy, and social cohesiveness. Contrary to the popular belief that there are many distributive principles from which economic policy-makers may select, in the absolute sense there are but two.

The first alternative is the principle of private property. The second is the principle of need. "Need" means the animal side of human beings and their creature-comfort requirements. It is the mechanism for allocating wealth or income among all people not on the basis of the productive input of those who participate in production, but on the basis of an opinion or

appraisal of the "need" of the people, whether or not they participated in the productive activity, and irrespective of the extent of that participation, if any.

Presently, our society in its public philosophy has overwhelmingly preferred the private property principle — that wealth belongs to those who produce it. The reasons are pragmatic. Before an economy can have a distribution problem, there must be a product to be distributed. No other incentive keeps people continually interested in doing those things that encourage production as sought after wealth, or money, that their labor or property has brought into being. The private property rule is embraced by socialists and capitalists all the same. Private property is also the ethical heart of the labor movement, and argues that every worker owns his or her own labor power and is thus entitled to receive, as a right, all of the wealth his or her labor produces in the marketplace. The private property principle makes it possible to objectively determine economic value and competitive markets. Without competitive markets, how can we determine the price of the items we buy and sell? If not, distribution of goods would be settled by brute force or arbitrary opinion.

The second alternative principle of distribution disregards productive input; its solely based on human need. All people would have to agree to be selfless in order to focus on the greater good. "To each according to his need" is of necessity a totalitarian principle. Its coercive nature is demonstrated by the fact that wherever it is found in society—family, (highly educated or poorly educated and all in between), military and religion—the organization of the distributive group is authoritarian and its members constrained to obey. Resentment arising from petty bickering over "sharing" (i.e., distribution) create friction among members and many exit these groups. Applied to a national economy, the need principle compels administration by government in order to avoid the resultant social strife. The need principle is unworkable so long as individuals remain even slightly selfish. For the exception of a military state, the need principle fuses politics and economics into a large and impersonal political, corporate, or social structure regarded as intractably indivisible and uniform because those who determine economic need are the same public office holders who wield the society's political power.

Only when the masses mobilize can we bring change to society. Mobilization has to be organized and have defined goals. It's easy to point out problems, and it takes continual work to identify and come up with solutions to these problems. Mobilization's biggest obstacle is getting people to be in agreement simultaneously of one societal constraint at a time. Ideally, a mobilization plan would address everyone's own needs but that would lead to social disorganization—for each decides his own needs disproportionately to what most people want, or to what others decide for themselves. Since such chaos is intolerable to

society, our communal disorder reinforces the state's totalitarian approach. The need principle also disregards the property rights of current owners. Ask yourself, "why should I sell my car in order for someone else to have money for car service? What's in it for me?"

Unlike the private property principle, the need principle has no intrinsic limitations, either physical or logical. Private property is objective and specific; need is subjective, and universal. Under the rule of private property, a claimant is entitled only to the equivalent of his or her production; this is a built-in check that automatically proportions demand to what is available. Private property enforces productive responsibility; it establishes orderly, dependable relationships between people, and between people and their environment. The need principle, by contrast, abolishes personal productive responsibility, severs dependable property relationships, and provides no mechanism to relate the size of the product to the demands of claimants. Thus, the underproductive or nonproductive may claim any part of the product or even all of it, in the name of their human need. Today in the United States, we are reminded by neighboring countries in need that poor nations have a moral claim to the wealth of rich nations no less than the poor within the United States have a moral claim of their own productive countrymen. Internationally and domestically, the effects of the need principle are the same: hatred, strife, violence, and the decay of productive motivation. Stoop Juice has afforded an opportunity where both principle of private property and need coexist harmoniously. Through vertical integration and a streamlined staff (me), I'm able to sell 100% organic juices and smoothies at non organic prices. Stoop Juice is rare since both principles of private property and need live together proactively in harmony under one roof.

Proactive vs. Reactive

The principles of private property and need are diametric opposites, both logically and in their social effects. Ideally, we could balance our lives within these principles as long as we have clearly defined goals with a realistic understanding of outcome. When given a choice, individuals should concentrate most efforts on private property. It's easy to gauge the outcome of efforts to produce goods or services in exchange for money to realize desired "quality of life." Desired or "good quality of life" is based on the need principle, subjective and fluid. The first of a four-step approach is determined by access to more opportunities because of wealth. The second is determined by how much of the sciences, engineering, technology, management and skills of labor an individual possesses. The third is determined by one's ability to learn, understand and articulate effectively these areas of study. The fourth and final step is to make the application and utilize our aptitude and abilities on things within our power. Can the constant leaps of faith required to evolve as we learn new things seem scary? Be discouraging? Keep us from reaching our full potential? Make many

of us opt to lead reactive lives? Take comfort in the words of Baruch Spinoza who wrote, “Be not astonished at new ideas; for it is well known to you that a thing does not therefore cease to be true because it is not accepted by many”. Jose and family

Jose, Dad and brother Rafael circa 1973

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CHAPTER 3 - WORLD'S BEST STORYTELLERS

The world’s best storytellers and the Brooklyn juice man (Jose Franco) were walking around Prospect Park this morning. Each explained to Jose why their religion, political party, beliefs and cultures were desirable. Each one highlighted what they perceived as their strengths while Jose questioned inconsistencies in their stories. Truth is so obscure in these times, and falsehood so established, that, unless we love the truth, we cannot know it. By the time the last story teller completed his tale, they all were shouting over each other, not addressing Jose’s questions or listening to what the other had to say. Unbeknownst to them, a group of college students was walking behind them, listening in. Once the sage bunch walking with the Juice man noticed, they aimed their shouting in the direction of the 18 to 26 year olds. Eventually, they repeated their stories then went their separate way.

Two minutes later, Jose giggled when he noticed how the students reacted to a pack of aggressive dogs, off their leashes, running towards them. “Relax and stand still, the group we were just with scared me more than these dogs and can cause a lot more harm” proclaimed Jose. The storytellers were humans, the most destructive animals on earth. A dog’s bite isn’t desirable but humans can do a lot more harm and impact billions of people. Dogs are social animals and are flexible in how they cooperate with each other. Since dogs have to meet each other, trust each other and get to know each other to form a pack, they’re limited to small groups relative to humans ability to cooperate with one another. A dog pack of 100 dogs is possible, but can dogs fill and sit still on every seat in Yankee Stadium by themselves? No, it’s impossible for 50,000 dogs to know and trust each other. Hence, humans control earth because we are the only animals that manage to cooperate flexibly in large numbers (billions). Humans are the only animals with an imagination and the ability to create and share stories in an efficiently scalable manner. This is why the story tellers directed their shouting towards the students once they realized they were being watched.

We seek cooperation through writing, podcasts, radio and other media making it possible to communicate our stories. Imagine the helpfulness of this article if read, shared and translated by billions of people. All great human achievements and atrocities have been possible through mass cooperation (splitting the atom, Einstein’s theory of relativity, the crusades, the holocaust etc) by stories created by humans to morally justify desired actions. Since dogs aren't capable of creating and imagining stories, racial or religious conflicts don't exist among German shepherds and Chiwawas. Canines don't have the ability to communicate a common narrative that brings thousands of poodles together to create great public works.

Individuals have to be able to self reflect and have clarity of what we want and each create an inner narrative. When we slow down and peel away all the distractions created by immaterial things, most of us want the same things; we want to be loved, validated and heard. Through story telling, we can inspire future advances in science, medicine and improved standards of living. We can also use storytelling to minimize future atrocities and wars. Imagine a world where we accept the idea “becoming” has no goal and that underneath all “becoming” there is no grand unity in which the individual could immerse himself completely as in an element of supreme value, we can choose another path: instead of judging ourselves and others for things we did or didn't do in the past, we all can instead invent a world beyond it, a true world. What individuals can become through proactive living and the habits we each choose to have are and become our true reality. Most important since the best way to affect the group is by individuals modeling desired behavior. In other words, we need to be an example for others through surrender.

Surrender is the simple but profound wisdom of yielding to rather than opposing the flow of life. Surrender is not the same thing as resignation. One can surrender to the reality of a situation and still take steps to create a different path. If you find your life situation unsatisfactory or even intolerable, it is only by surrendering first that you can break the unconscious resistance pattern that perpetuates that situation (Stop being judgmental to yourself and others). The paradox of the stories we tell ourselves leads to all that is good and bad. During good moments, how we shape our narrative help us deal with the trauma we confront in life. Trauma rewires the brain and changes the way people experience the world. Trauma affects the mind and body immensely and prevents those affected from living in the present. So in essence, we are and become the stories we tell ourselves. Our internal narratives can also be dangerous if we're narrow minded, disregard constructive criticism and ego driven. We mustn't let our ego become a controlling factor in the way we act and make decisions. If this sounds like you, don't tell yourself a story. In such instances, the stories we tell ourselves are just labels that put us at odds not just with reality, but with the real strategy that made us successful in the first place. From that place, we might think that success in the future is just the natural next part of the story-when really it's rooted in work, creativity, persistence, and luck.

CHAPTER 4 - THE DILEMMA

In an attempt to lose 15 pounds, I've started going for longer walks in my Park Slope neighborhood. As I walked by the Brooklyn Museum, I noticed a sign which states the opposite of what my wife wants me to do. ("Do Not Disappear Into Silence"). My biggest challenge as a small business owner consist of my inner battle deciding whether to speak out or remain silent regarding national politics. In 2018, I threw caution to the wind and commented on 200+ New York Times, Washington Post and Huff Post articles encouraging readers to mobilize and to think for themselves. I opted to comment online instead of sharing unsolicited advice with Stoop Juice walk-in customers. My in store attempts have produced mixed results, like when I engaged a hat wearing patron who seemed troubled, as he ordered a juice. He sighed and rolled his eyes as I asked, “Do you know what agape is? On another occasion, I refused to honor a certificate for a complementary 60 day juice cleanse to an individual who agreed to be featured in the "Benefits Of Juicing" documentary, because he didn't honor a mutual agreement. These misunderstandings have convinced my

wife and business partner, I need to avoid offering unsolicited advice and solely focus on selling juices and smoothies. My wife believes as a byproduct of my interactions, the shop's website was hacked and I was pranked called by someone who claimed to be Donald Trump.

Despite my wife's opposition, In January of 2018, I started collecting signatures to run for President of The United States. Through a post on Facebook , I announced my intentions out of frustration to the January 2018 government shutdown. I've written 55 articles on LinkedIn addressing healthcare, gun control, consciousness, economics, self awareness and the five primary ways new habits can be triggered. If you understand each habit trigger, then you can select the right one for the particular habit that you are working on. Unfortunately, other people (Donald Trump) is one of the triggers and can make an immediate impact in your life and plays a role on your habits and behaviors.

Agape means universal love in Greek. It is the highest form of love—of God for man, and man for God. The fedora wearing customer told me about a business deal gone wrong between he and his brother—a deal in which he had gone against his better judgement based on trying to please their mother. This was always on his mind. I told him that he is perpetuating his own feelings due to not being willing to forgive his brother, and suggested he consider it in order to free himself of this burden. He smiled then said, "that's easier said than done". The other customer (documentary) wasn't able to lose the first 10 pounds on his own within 40 days, as we had agreed upon. These two experiences helped me realize, it's sometimes difficult for people to approach things rationally when history and emotions are involved.

Unequal results of human achievement conjure up simplistic notions of injustice which can result in people misunderstanding my good intentions. Any business owner worth their salt has to follow politics and current affairs closely as the decisions made at the seat of power aren't simple and/or transparent. These acts naturally impact the future success of any business and require continuous attention since ignorance is never a good excuse. I recognize my life is in process and what works for me may not work for someone else. Regardless of person, we must be accountable, transparent and surrender to our individual realities. We all have to contend with our capacity to do good and evil. Far too many people set themselves up for defeat because they're unwilling to acknowledge the destructive side of their being. Opting instead to utilize coping mechanisms instead of chasing the difficult task of surrendering and objectively seeing yourself. Surrender is not the same thing as resignation. One can surrender to the reality of a situation and still take steps to create a different path. The concept of "motivation" is very important and challenges the assumption that acceptance will lead to equality or a lack of motivation. Equality is as undesirable as it is

unrealizable. Attempting to achieve equality requires that each of us forego who we are and what we can do in order to create something in which no one ultimately believes - a society everybody is the same or has the same. let us by all means seek to increase opportunities for all. We have to proceed knowing to increase opportunities for all is likely to favor those better able to take advantage of them and may often first increase inequalities.

Donald Trump has made it impossible for me to be silent. My wife thinks silence is scarce and rare and she wants me to deliberately keep myself out of the conversation and subsist without its validation. Mrs. Franco often says, "Silence is the respite of the confident and the strong." Unfortunately, we have an insecure President who projects in order to avoid facing his dark side and poses a danger to society. Projection occurs when we attribute an element of our personality, which resides in our unconscious to another person or a group. By itself, projection is one of the commonest psychic phenomenas. Everything that is unconscious in ourselves we discover in our neighbor and we treat him accordingly. Projection is a necessary component in our phycological development as it's a primary means by which we can gain an awareness of elements residing in our unconscious. After projecting an element of our unconscious, the healthy thing to do is to recognize the subjective origin of the projection to withdraw it from the external world and to integrate this element of our personality into conscious awareness (The Now). This allows us to become aware of the faults we previously projected onto others and take corrective measures.

Instead of showing courage by facing his weaknesses and dark qualities, Donald Trump blames Mexicans and other immigrants for the ills of our nation. Failure to confront his internal imperfections forces the President to continually look for scapegoats to make up for his shortcomings. Trump knows exactly what he's doing by targeting entire groups not individuals. Trump's rhetoric is appealing to already formed groups who also use Mexicans and immigrants as ready made scapegoats. Relationships with these groups allow the President to avoid damaging personal relationships which occurs when you use someone close to you as a scapegoat. Scapegoating at a group level is made easier by the fact that some group members (all races) are individuals who are composed of their own weaknesses and flaws. The President's rhetoric tries to provide legitimate reasons for indignation and falsely magnifies the problems by his proposed wall on the US and Mexican border. A small number of undesirable Mexicans serve as the hook Donald Trump has tied all of America's problems. Trump's approach sends the wrong message and makes it plausible to justify persecution and violence to an entire group. This use of propaganda and other manipulation techniques are implemented to divert the public's attention from Donald Trump's other activities.

Trump's inability to self reflect overlooks four fundamental truths: (1) our capacity to destroy one another is matched by our capacity to heal one another. Restoring relationships and community is central to restoring well-being; (2) language gives us the power to change ourselves and others by communicating our experiences, helping us to define what we know, and finding a common sense of meaning; (3) thru surrender, we have the ability to regulate our own physiology, including some of the so-called involuntary functions of the body and brain, through such basic activities as breathing, moving, and touching; and (4) we can change social conditions to create environments in which children and adults can feel safe and where they can thrive regardless who occupies the White House. Once these truths are once again encouraged nationally, I can disappear into silence.

CHAPTER 5 - THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE ARE ONE

At the moment, if you go by the majority of reader's comments in a New York Times article titled "Wall Street, Seeking Big Tax Breaks, Sets Sights on Distressed Main Streets" most Americans are in full anti-Trump mode which I find thoughtless and counterproductive. I'm aware the Trump administration has been an aberration, an outrage, but most of all, a great big fraud. Despite this, even a fool, is occasionally right. In faith there is enough light for those who want to believe and enough shadows to blind those who don't. Unlike the President, James Cagney, who at the height of his success avoided interviews that promoted the gangster stereotype Donald Trump attempts to personify. Cagney was an American actor noted for his portrayal of mobsters in crime dramas who famously agreed to a personal interview to express his love for botany. Five minutes into the interview, as he showed off the flowers in the backyard of his Martha Vineyard's home, Cagney abruptly ended the interview when the reporter asked him "if he ever gunned down the weeds in his garden, like he guns down people in the movies?" When the reporter asked why he terminated the interview, Cagney replied, "Playing a gangster is what I do. It's not who I am."

The reporter's action (common by today's standards) illustrates why the news is often regarded a mixture between a trivial waste of time and resources, and a dangerously subversive system that at times promote social division, stereotypes and community breakdown. Surprisingly, this all takes place in the countries with the largest mass media who also happen to be the most modernized and powerful nations. The paradox is that this cohesive function is sustained in a context of frequently divisive media content. This media function evolved because modern mass media produce an excess of media communications in a context of consumer choice which generates competition for public attention both within- and between-media. Competition has led the media to become increasingly specialized (social media) at gaining and retaining public attention. Social cohesion is the consequence of the mass media continually drawing public attention to itself, which makes James Cagney's integrity and clarity of purpose through refusal a rare occurrence.

Could it be that our purpose has nothing to do with what we do for a living? Maybe our purpose, Like James Cagney's is really about living authentically and discovering who we really are. Most people will never be able to comprehend this perspective since many of us look for external validation instead of looking within ourselves. Most of us avoid the work (inquiry) prior to making the application (self advocacy). We also avoid the benefits of disconnecting or silence. At times, some of us don’t like ourselves entirely and avoid acknowledging (denial) our flaws. Lastly, many of us have a disdain for the unconscious mind.

Unequal results of human achievement conjure up simplistic notions of injustice. These perceived unfairness add to the challenges my shop face today. Any small business owner worth their salt has to follow politics and current affairs closely as the decisions made at the seat of power aren’t simple and/or transparent. These acts naturally impact the future success of any business since ignorance is never a good excuse. The romantic idea of love and peace are noble and easily rationalized, but the last time I checked most landlords don’t accept hugs in lieu of rent. Lastly, the obstacles in American politics we most often can’t resolve are usually Republican and Democratic extreme ideologies. These circular arguments enable obstruction of fair governance.

In January of 2018 I started collecting signatures to run for President as an Independent after posting a Facebook rant disapproving the first government shutdown. These are my 5 beliefs as a servant leader,

1. Citizens and government want the same things.

2. Technique counts less than intent.

3. Solutions don’t have inherent value (one size doesn't fit all)

4. We all Should Promote Methodology

5. World - class inquiry precedes world - class advocacy

Since I love running my juice bar, walking away from politics would be easy for me. Unfortunately, I have to be politically active since I now know that one of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being governed by your inferiors.

What would be better for The United States than me getting elected President in 2020? Not winning and I continue making juices and smoothies while being part of a movement of citizens that reminds Americans, government and the people are the same. I think we should seek to make open-source cooperation sustainable through servant leader beliefs similar to what programmers do with software. Part of the answer certainly lies in the fact that using software does not decrease its value. Instead, widespread use of open-source software tends to increase its value, as users fold in their own fixes and features (code patches). In this inverse commons, the grass grows taller when it's grazed upon. That this public good cannot be degraded by overuse takes care of half of the congested–public-goods problem. It doesn't explain why open source doesn't suffer from under provision. Why don't people who know the open-source community exists universally exhibit free-rider behavior waiting for others to do the work they need, or (if they do the work themselves) not bothering to contribute the work back into the commons? Part of the answer lies in the fact that people don't merely need solutions, they need solutions on time. It's seldom possible to predict when someone else will finish a given piece of needed work. If the payoff from fixing a bug or adding a feature is sufficient to any potential contributor, that person will dive in and do it (at which point the fact that everyone else is a free rider becomes irrelevant). Another part of the answer lies in the fact that the putative market value of small patches to a common source base is hard to capture. Being reactive by only sitting on the patch gains nothing. Instead, it incurs a future cost—the effort involved in re-merging the patch into the source base in each new release. So the payoff from not being a (political) participant is actually negative.

Back in 2016, despite months of feuding between the Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton campaigns, and the establishment politicians who perpetuate a system that many feel is rigged against the voters, Senator Sanders decided to quietly accept the hard electoral math. As responsible citizens we must also be accountable and transparent and surrender to our

individual realities. Unfortunately, most of us lose sight of the expected outcome of our actions. Would you refuse a promotion you desire and instead offer it to a more capable team member for the greater good? The task of objectively seeing yourself can be difficult. Before a person can lead others he/she has to lead him/herself through surrender. Surrender is not the same thing as resignation. One can surrender to the reality of a situation and still take steps to create a different path. The concept of “motivation” is very important for a leader and challenges the assumption that acceptance will lead to a lack of motivation. Equality is as undesirable as it is unrealizable. Attempting to achieve equality requires that each of us forego who we are and what we can do in order to create something in which no one ultimately believes - a society everybody is the same or has the same. let us by all means seek to increase opportunities for all. We have to proceed knowing to increase opportunities for all is likely to favor those better able to take advantage of them and may often first increase inequalities. (Example: Alexandria Ocasio Cortez January 2018 salary vs January 2019 salary)

CHAPTER 6 - TWO PEAS IN A POD

Many of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Donald Trump's supporters reasons for mobilizing stems from two linked fears, A.O.C.'s base's fear of being taken advantage of and Donald Trump's supporter's fear of under producing for lack of opportunities. Creating a way, a path, for us to work with citizens and government in a format that eliminates these ingrained fears by understanding both supply and demand is the singular goal of my political ambition. On the demand side, the commons situation encourages a race to the bottom by overuse—what economists call a congested–public-good problem. On the supply side, the commons rewards free-rider behavior—removing or diminishing incentives for individual actors to invest in developing more output. The tragedy of the commons predicts only three possible outcomes. One is the sea of mud many think we have today. Another is for actors with coercive power to enforce an allocation policy on behalf of the people (A.O.C.'s socialist solution). The third is for the commons to break up as village members, fence-off bits they can defend and manage sustainably. (Trump's physical and metaphysical wall)

For Republicans, governments are socialist only when they redistribute wealth to benefit the multitude–say, for infrastructure, education and art. Republicans fear slow economic growth, less entrepreneurial opportunity and competition, and a potential lack of motivation by individuals due to lesser rewards. A.O.C.'s 70% tax rate for high income earners, comes to mind. Whereas, the Trump administration has been an aberration, an outrage, but most of all, a great big fraud. Voters who thought President Trump would at least try to fulfill his populist, America-first campaign promises are still waiting. Trump placates these supporters with rhetoric, distracts them with cultural warfare and encourages them to seek refuge in cultural chauvinism. Both Ms. Cortez and Mr. Trump's ideas are half truths and smoke-and-mirrors of often repeated Republican and Democratic economic policy talking points.

Full Disclosure

I started collecting signatures on January 23, 2018, the day after the first government shutdown to run for President of The United States in 2020. My efforts were received with some fan fare in my Park Slope, Brooklyn community, culminating with someone volunteering to help me. Unfortunately, the close to 4,000 signatures mostly collected by the volunteer (I choose not to name) are up in the air. I found out the volunteer, without malice was telling signers I supported a proposed 28th amendment to the U.S. Constitution, falsely claiming it has evolved in modified form as the "Congressional Reform Act of 2018". Once I became aware, I told my volunteer no such reform act exists. As a result, I haven't seen him or the collected signatures since.

The way things should be

Instead of A.O.C. pandering to her constituent's fear by mimicking Donald Trump's non-virtuous approach, both Democrats and Republicans should seek to make open-source cooperation sustainable similar to what programmers do with software. Part of the answer certainly lies in the fact that using software does not decrease its value. Instead, widespread use of open-source software tends to increase its value, as users fold in their own fixes and features (code patches). In this inverse commons, the grass grows taller when it's grazed upon. That this public good cannot be degraded by overuse takes care of half of the congested–public-goods problem. It doesn't explain why open source doesn't suffer from under provision. Why don't people who know the open-source community exists universally exhibit free-rider behavior waiting for others to do the work they need, or (if they do the work themselves) not bothering to contribute the work back into the commons? Part of the answer lies in the fact that people don't merely need solutions, they need solutions on time.

It's seldom possible to predict when someone else will finish a given piece of needed work. If the payoff from fixing a bug or adding a feature is sufficient to any potential contributor, that person will dive in and do it (at which point the fact that everyone else is a free rider becomes irrelevant). Another part of the answer lies in the fact that the putative market value of small patches to a common source base is hard to capture. Being reactive by only sitting on the patch gains nothing. Instead, it incurs a future cost—the effort involved in re-merging the patch into the source base in each new release. So the payoff from this choice is actually negative. I'm inspired by the words of Algeron Sidney, "Our inquiry is not after that which is perfect, well knowing that no such thing is found among men; but we seek that human constitution which is attended with the least, or the most pardonable inconveniences". The works of Algernon Sidney, Discourses Concerning Government are considered a cornerstone of western thought. The ideas it put forth survived and ultimately culminated in the founding of the United States.

Instead of standing on the sidelines waiting for solutions to drop from the sky, I've written this easily accessible article hoping it encourages all people to think and hopefully unite. Suppose all Americans realize my article has a monetary value; how do I collect from all those people? We all can win if we see money for what it really is, a social construct that promotes exchange through trust. To put it more positively, I won't need to run for President since the sole purpose of my effort is to promote transparency and constructive critique from reader's input and potential input from different groups.

How do we start?

Servant leadership is a philosophy and set of practices that enriches the lives of individuals, builds better organizations and ultimately creates a more just and caring world. We should enable Americans to form habitual ways to meet certain needs or solve day-to-day problems instead of reading distracting tweets. Tell yourself, "greatness is the perception that virtue is enough". Unfortunately, the common person often lacks virtue, instead we avoid looking within ourselves to make self-improvements to increase our value in the free market. The weakest rebuttal to what I propose is that no market is absolutely free; a frail objection since all things exists in the margins. I advocate for capitalism by arguing the economic pendulum should swing more in the direction of the free market in order to promote a better quality of life for the masses. Ideally, we could balance our lives, with clearly defined goals and a realistic understanding of outcome. Put another way, individuals must know and understand the probability and effectiveness of their actions in order to reach their goals. I think we need to be both constructively skeptical and virtuous while helping those in need. Since gauging need is subjective, it opens up the door for misinterpretation and disagreement

regarding distribution. How do we qualify, quantify and communicate an individual's need? Who's the agent of interpretation?

These are 5 beliefs that should be avoided:

1. Citizens and government want different things.

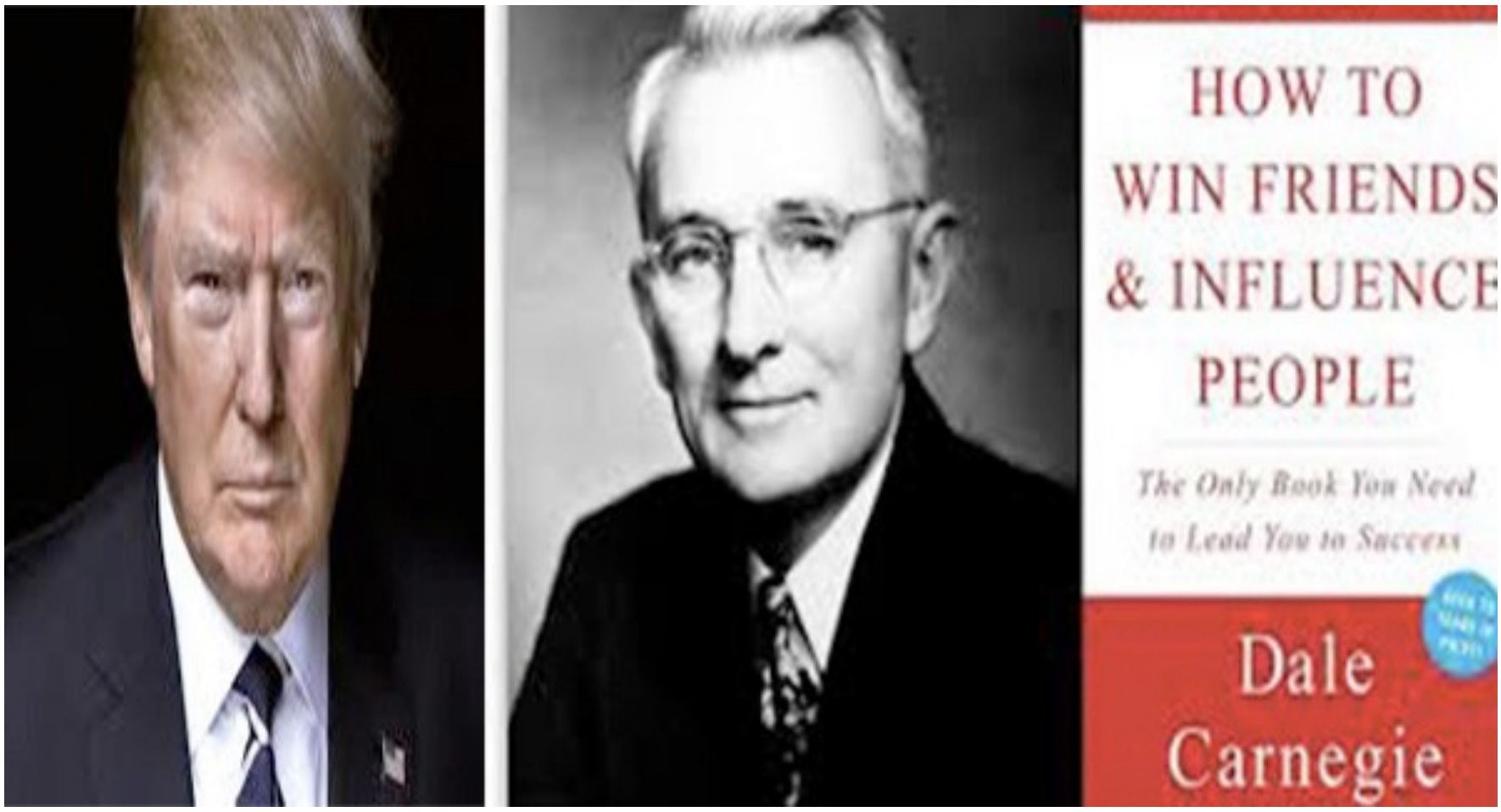
2. Technique counts more than intent.

3. Solutions have inherent value (one size fits all)

4. Donald Trump ignores Methodology

5. World - class advocacy precedes world - class Inquiry (talking before listening) or a misinformed will to power approach.

Reversing these five key beliefs set the groundwork for a process that allows government to deal with Democrats and Republican citizens in an honest, straightforward manner where we can discover all issues and needs, gather the hard information needed to create solutions that puts our country's sustainability above all else.



CHAPTER 7 - TWO GUN CROWLEY

Donald Trump is one of the most unapologetic public figures of our times. despite often bragging of how seldom he reads, he knows exactly what he's doing. I think during a lucid moment, Donald Trump read Dale Carnegie's “How to win friends and influence people”. The first chapter of the book addresses one of the biggest complaints regarding Donald Trump's interpersonal skills, he never admits to being wrong. The example Carnegie uses to illustrate this lack of self awareness involved "Two Gun Crowley" a killer who was finally trapped by the police in his girl friend’s apartment in 1931. Surrounded by police; Crowley carried on a gun battle with police until captured. New York’s police commissioner said he was one of the most dangerous criminals in the history of New York who would kill "at the drop of a feather.”

Carnegie points out, however, that while Crowley was trapped in the apartment he wrote a "to whom it may concern" letter which said in part: "Under my coat is a weary heart, but a kind one – one that would do nobody any harm." A short time before this, Crowley had shot a policeman to death when he asked him for his driver’s license. When Crowley was sent to Sing Sing to be executed, he said "This is what I get for defending myself." The point of the story is that "Two Gun Crowley" didn’t blame himself for anything.

Envision a young Donald Trump in the 1960's reading Carnegie's book while waiting for his order of White Castle burgers a block from his Fordham University campus. Trump's attempt to win friends highlights his repeated pattern of relationships with interesting characters since college up until 2012. Back in late 1970's Roger Stone, a former Nixon operative and self-described practitioner of the political "black arts," is introduced to Donald Trump by attorney Roy Cohn, whose pugilistic style became well-known when he served as chief counsel for Sen. Joseph McCarthy (R-WI) during his Senate anti-communist hearings. Roger Stone found a lobbying practice with Paul Manafort, who is a childhood friend. Trump becomes one of Stone's first clients. In the 1980s, Trump hires Manafort as a lobbyist on gambling and real-estate issues. By 1988, Stone is one of Trump's closest advisers. In 1988, Roger Stone urges Donald Trump to run for President for the first time.

In the opening episode of The Apprentice on Jan. 8, 2004, Trump says, "About 13 years ago, I was seriously in trouble. I was billions of dollars in debt." In 1998, after a string of bankruptcies in Trump's casino and hotel businesses in the 1990s, Deutsche Bank becomes one of the few major financial institutions willing to lend him money.

What was happening in Russia in 1998? Russia defaults on its debt and its stock market collapses. As the value of the ruble plummets, Russian millionaires scramble to get money out of their country and into New York City, where real estate provides a safe haven for overseas investors. In 1998 demolition of a vacant office building near the United Nations headquarters makes way for a new Trump high-rise, Trump World Tower. Donald Trump begins selling units in the skyscraper, which is scheduled to open in 2001 and becomes a prominent depository of Russian money.

In 2002, Russian-born Felix Sater and his company Bayrock Group — a Trump Tower tenant — began working with Trump on a series of real estate development deals, one of which becomes Trump SoHo. That same year efforts to sell Russians apartments in Trump World Tower, Trump's West Side condominiums and Trump's building on Columbus Circle expand with presentations in Moscow involving Sotheby's International Realty and a Russian realty firm. In September of 2007, as Trump speaks at the launch party for Trump SoHo, Felix Sater and his Bayrock partner, Kazakhstan native Tevfik Arif, stand next to him. Two days after a Dec. 17, 2007, article in The New York Times about Felix Sater's criminal past, a lawyer deposing Trump in his libel suit against journalist Timothy O'Brien — author of TrumpNation: The Art of Being the Donald — asks, "What kind of interaction did you have with Mr. Sater prior to the article appearing?" Trump answers, "Not that much, not very

much... I would say that my interaction with Felix Sater was, you know, not — was very little."

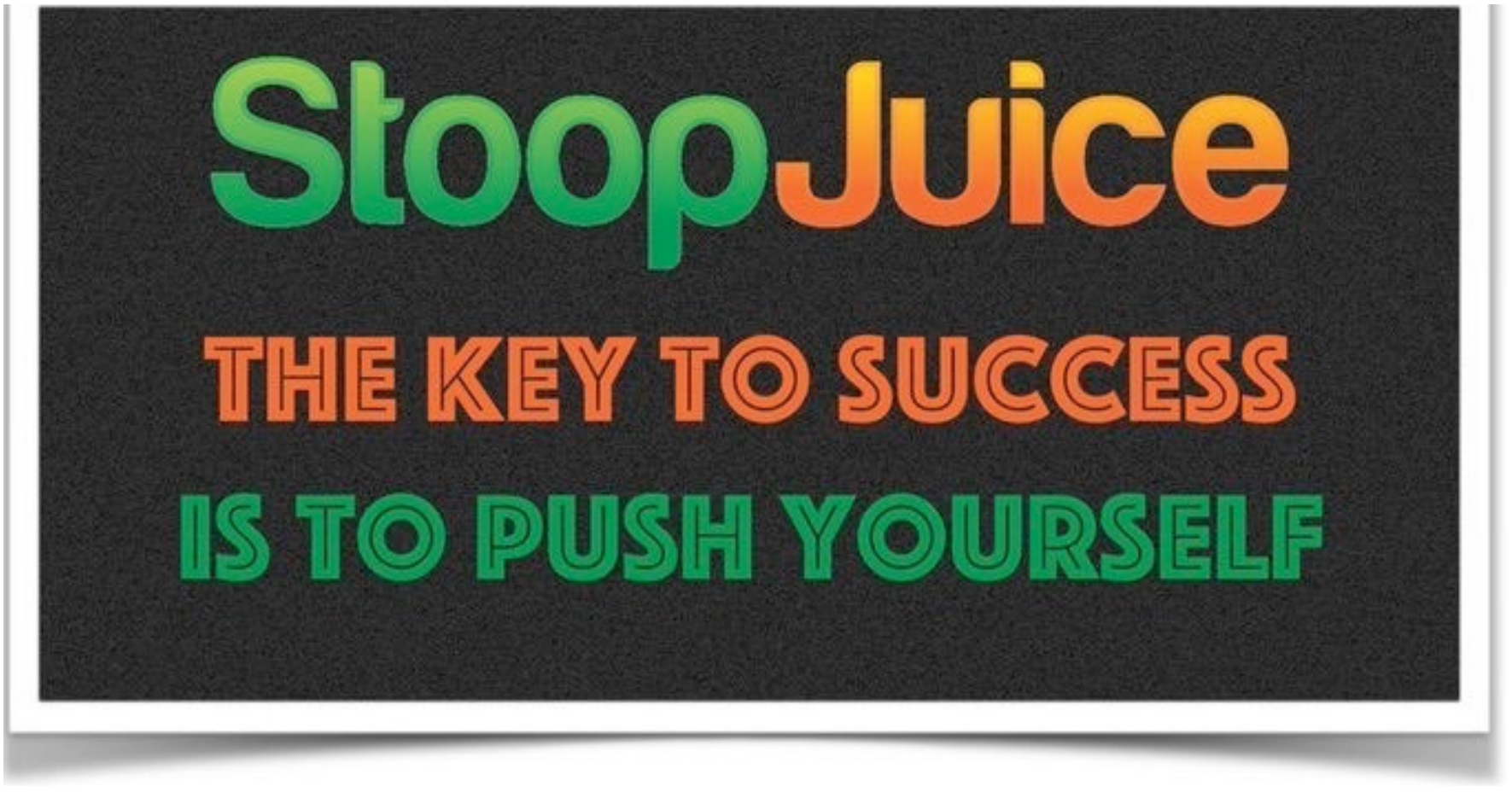
In 2008, as the Florida real estate market begins to crash, Trump sold a Florida residence to a Russian oligarch named Dmitry Rybolovlev for $95 million. The transaction was at the time considered to be the biggest single-family home sale in US history. After leaving Bayrock, Felix Sater becomes "senior adviser to Donald Trump," according to his Trump Organization business card. He also has a Trump Organization email address and office. The phone number listed on the card had belonged previously to a lawyer in Trump's general counsel's office. In 2010, a Putin controlled bank funds Trump's Toronto Towers at a key moment for the financially troubled Trump property, the Russian-Canadian developer of the project receives $850 million from the sale of his share in a Ukrainian steel mill. In 2012, according to later reporting by The New York Times, financial records filed in December 2015 in the secret tax haven of Cyprus show that Trump's future campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, incurs debts totaling as much as $17 million to pro-Russia interests, including a Russian oligarch, Oleg Deripaska, who later sues Manafort and his partners for $19 million over a failed investment in a Ukrainian television business.

Today, Trump is betting Michael Cohen's admission of guilt is viewed like "Two Gun Crowley's" to whom it may concern letter. Back in 2006 at Donald Trump's invitation, Michael Cohen joined the Trump Organization. Age 40 at the time, Cohen had known Felix Sater since they were teenagers on Long Island. Apparently, Cohen first came to Trump's attention after Cohen and his extended family became purchasers of numerous apartment units in Trump World Tower and other Trump properties.

On November 29, 2018 Michael Cohen, pleaded guilty to lying to Congress about plans to build a tower for Mr. Trump in Russia. Mr Cohen acknowledges his mistakes and continues to cooperate with the Mueller investigation. In April 2018 Michael Cohen's office, home and hotel suite were raided by the FBI. Michael Cohen and the FBI only know what the raid revealed. One scenario of the raid lists a map of where all "the bodies" of Donald Trump's Russian deals are buried. Since then, Trump has increased his attack on the media sounding more like "Two Gun Crowley".

Trump has been hiding in the White House with a group of sympathizers (or) coconspirators. These individuals like Crowley's girlfriend are hostages. What's worst for most of Trump's detainees, they aren't held captive at gunpoint but through the promise of a Presidential pardon. Presently, Trump sees no upside in writing a "to whom it may concern" letter, let alone show remorse. This may change when he runs out of options and his family is implicated. When this occurs expect Trump as he's done so many times before,

to throw his flunkies under the bus. Unless Trump has another lucid moment and exclaims “Under my over-combed head is a weary brain, but a huge one – one that "Will Not Make America Great Again." Only to be followed in closing by, "This is what I get for trying to help you people".



CHAPTER 8 - KEY TO SUCCESS

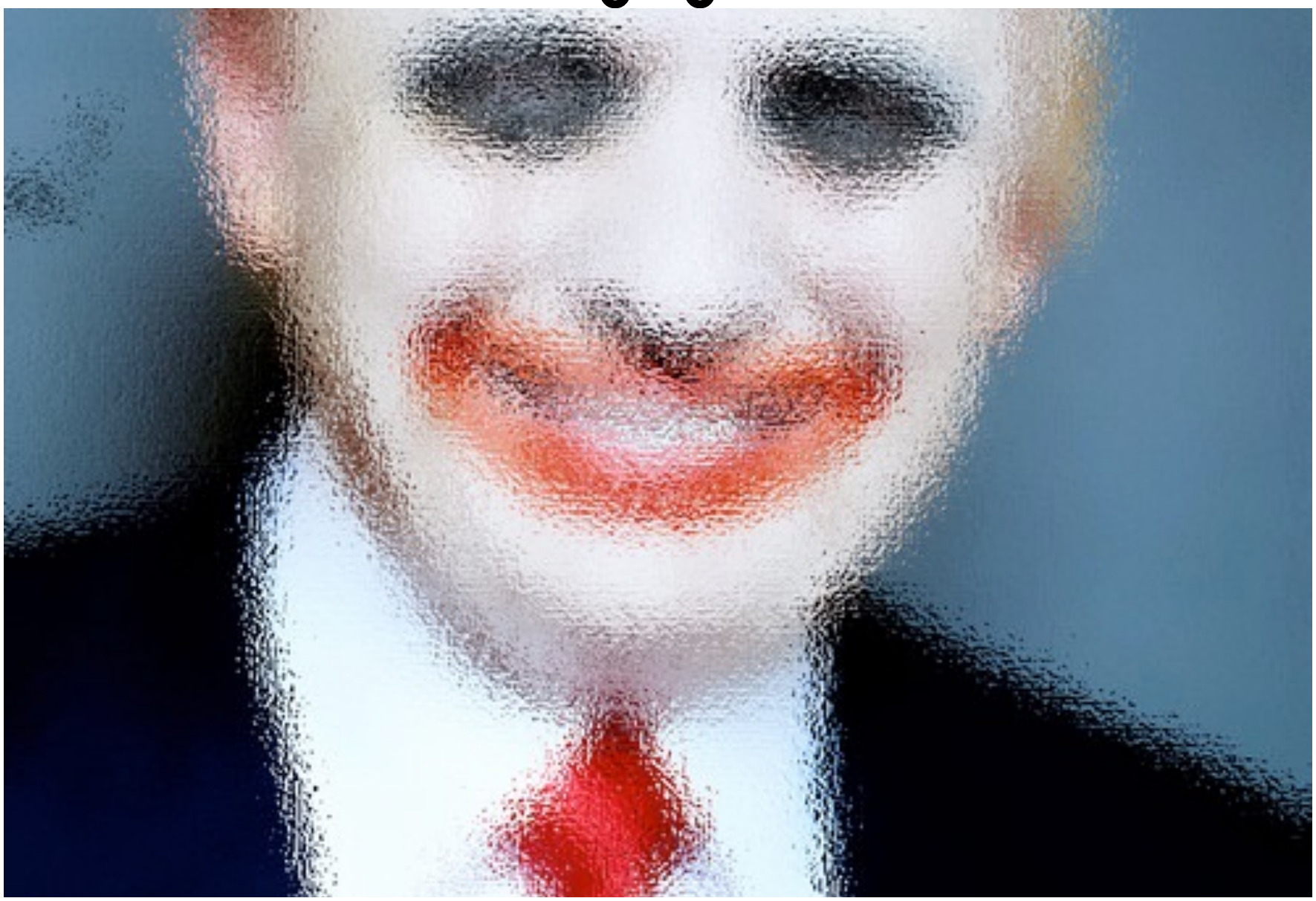
The major difference between mass media and social media is this; the mass media puts the audience in a passive position. Social media puts the audience at the center and with work, could do a better job at reaching your business's market niche. Through social media, Stoop Juice has implemented a marketing campaign that interacts with existing and potential customers. Our typical patron is interested in a healthy balanced life style consisting of healthy food options, exercise and consciousness. By posting original articles reflecting our customer's interest on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter pages regularly, our brand's exposure has increased exponentially.

Small businesses commonly advertise to increase brand awareness and sales (online, print, radio and television) A new recipe or the smoothie of the day are common go to's to promote healthy food choices. Instructional videos on exercise are everywhere and also promotes desired healthy lifestyle. These videos are featured in ad spots during shows their intended demographic is likely to be watching. Newspaper advertising, typically costs less per thousand readers than television, radio, and direct mail advertising. In addition, newspaper staff members will work directly with advertisers to create ads at no additional costs. Newspaper advertising can also be customized to meet your budget.

A huge obstacle to normalizing the balanced lifestyle we promote is the little amount of shows, reports and features which promote thoughtfulness, self awareness and consciousness regularly on paid media. The owners of the media are usually large corporations whose primary focus is profits. And so it isn't so much that the media are selling your product, they're also selling other advertiser's products. Mindfulness can't compete with what's reported in the news by the complicity of the media with advertisers. Today, even at the local level, the government, corporations and big institutions know how to play the media game. They know how to influence the news narrative. They feed media scoops, official accounts, interviews with the 'experts'. They make themselves crucial to the process of journalism. So, those in power and those who report on them are in bed with each other and only pay lip service to individuals who seek "the truth". When Stoop Juice competes with corporations that advertise unhealthy processed food with big advertising budgets, we are pushed to the margins. Since our offering strays away from the consensus, the same media outlet we've used with past success are in action discrediting our sources, trashing our articles and diverting our conversation with potential customers to other entities willing to pay. These savvy ads will negatively reference actors as nerds instead of well informed or grass grazers in place of vegans to create a common enemy, a bogeyman to fear which helps corral public opinion against our balanced living message.

By mostly advertising on social media, Stoop Juice continually creates content that is available to customers whenever they become self aware and seek to start or continue a healthy balanced lifestyle. We've published close to 60 articles with titles such as "The Healthy 3%", "The five triggers that promotes new habits", "Self talk and keeping the weight off" and "Are you woke yet?" In an article titled "Self Awareness" the writer (Jose Franco) states, "Hearing or reading information that backs our beliefs feels good, validates our opinions and so we often seek it out. Many conservatives think liberal-minded individuals treat Rachel Maddow's words as gospel. At the same time, many Liberals think most conservatives flock to Fox News and absorb almost everything said without a hint of skepticism." We disagree with both these binary labeled views. Labeled views (liberal, Conservative) are easily packaged for people to choose external commonalities instead of being in the moment and self reflecting. A sentiment most of our customers agree with. The age of new media has produced only a handful of profitable new companies (Amazon and Google are the most notable examples). At the same time, while old media (newspapers, TV, radio) have proved more resilient than many observers expected, their business models continue to be severely undermined. we might also think that success in the future is just the natural next part of the story comforting you with a false sense of security—when really it's rooted in work, creativity, persistence, and luck regardless of fear.

By fear, I mean the inability to create a plan of action because of all the conflicting ads, articles and reporting in the media. Why should the owner of a Park Slope, Brooklyn juice bar write content that takes time to read and understand despite knowing most people may not read it, live far from the shop and/or aren't ready to buy? This is our attempt to save people from modern censorship. Censorship no longer works by hiding information from you; censorship works by flooding you with immense amounts of misinformation, of irrelevant information, videos of people falling, SMNR and music videos, until you're just unable to focus. Most of us are flawed beings, when confronted with low-hanging fruit in the Tree of Life, we have to resist plucking it. To put it another way, If offered $50 today or $100 in a year, most people take the money and run, even though it's against their best interests. However, if offered $50 in five years or $100 in six years, almost everybody chooses the $100! Our decisions are guided by the perceived values at the moment of the decision - not by the potential final value. This is why I think so many of us are distracted by the less nutritious products with larger advertising budgets that Stoop Juice compete against. When public goods are present, everything changes. Information is an almost perfect example of a pure public good. It is completely non rival and largely non excludable. Non rivalry means that, once produced, information can be used by as many people as can gain access to it, without reducing its availability to others. The crucial development of the Information revolution has been to reduce the cost of distributing information, in many cases effectively to zero. The crucial development here is the ease with which information that promotes the public good can be reproduced and made available on social media. We've found the majority of people reading and sharing our free articles are business owners, managers on LinkedIn and Facebook.



CHAPTER 9 - ARE YOU WOKE YET?

Should you remain silent when you realize the stories about America you've been telling yourself are proven false by the President's behavior? A philosopher who is not taking part in discussions is like a boxer who never goes into the ring. Once awakened, the worst case scenario may prompt you to think "life sucks". If this sounds like you, recognizing other people lead productive lives while your life continues to be underwhelming, is a step in the right direction and can lead to self awareness and surrender. Philosophy allows us to use the tools of logic and reason to analyze the ways in which we experience the world. It teaches critical thinking through logical analysis; it allows us to understand the stories we tell ourselves, and our place in the world.

Nietzsche once proclaimed, "How shall we comfort ourselves, murderers of all murderers!" Unlike Nietzsche, most people avoid facing their dark side opting instead to project their biases. Projection occurs when we attribute an element of our personality, which resides in our unconscious to another person or a group. By itself, projection is one of the commonest psychic phenomenas. Everything that is unconscious in ourselves we

discover in our neighbor and we treat him accordingly. Projection is a necessary component in our psychological development as it's a primary means by which we can gain an awareness of elements residing in our unconscious. If people never did silly things nothing intelligent would ever get done.

According to Professor David Logan, author of "Tribal Leadership", 48% of the groups we belong to, at first, seem to be functional, with most individuals having a high regard for their place in the organization. However, many of them complain that they're doing all the work. They form "dyads" – one-on-one relationships between two people – and have little communication beyond that. Immanuel Kant and Donald Trump's philosophy fall under this group as many of Kant's writings and Trump's rhetoric promote a revolutionary enthusiasm that are often bias. David Hume's "Method Of Moral Philosophy" showed that reason is properly a "slave to the passions unlike the experimental and empirical; which illustrates mankind's greatest weakness. Unlike Hume, Kant unintentionally blinded himself by seeing the world for what he wanted it to be, instead of Hume's emphasis on reason and empirical data, to perceive the world as it really is. Kant emphasized the superiority of good will over nature. His writings omitted vital events and information that make one question man's behavior or their convictions. We find this behavior in most places where smart, successful people show up. Failure to confront our imperfections forces us to continually look for scapegoats to make up for when the story we're telling ourselves doesn't add up. Scapegoating at a group level is made easier by the fact that some group members (all races) are individuals composed of their own weaknesses and flaws.

Maximilien Robespierre, the architect of the French Revolution's Reign of Terror effectively utilized scapegoating to secure power, encouraged the execution, mostly by guillotine, of more than 17,000 enemies of the Revolution. Robespierre was also beheaded after he attempted to place fault, blame and pressure (more scapegoating) on the members of the National Convention. The goal of the French Revolution was to change the system, and get food back into citizens' mouths by getting rid of the monarchy and found a system powered by the people, their slogan was "Liberty! Equality!" This ideological war has been waged since the17th century and continues today, (Enlightenment) emphasizing reason and individualism rather than tradition. Aware of this, it could be argued, Donald Trump (and/or his handlers) stole a page from a famous philosopher's playbook in order to create doubt and an air of mystique by not putting any plans down on paper. The writings of Socrates were never saved or written down. All of what we know about Socrates is from what other people wrote about him. Our main source of what we know about Socrates is from the writings of his student, Plato. Some of Plato's dialogues, such as the Crito and the Phaedo, are loosely based on fact. Trump's avoidance of the free press is an attempt to minimize the

media's access to verifiable activities illustrated by the demise of the White House Presidential Press Conference. Unlike philosopher Yuval Noah Harari, many of us haven't put in the work of reading these writings, shutting out new ideas easily accessible to us. We often ignore new ideas despite knowing a thing does not therefore cease to be true because it is not accepted by many. Yuval Noah Harari describes this phenomena in his book "21 Lessons For The 21st Century", "When a thousand people believe some made-up story for one month, that's fake news. When a billion people believe it for a thousand years, that's a religion, and we are admonished not to call it "fake news" in order not to hurt the feelings of the faithful (or incur their wrath)."

Enabling readers to experience an epiphany about communication that unites Americans around a core set of values is my goal. These values encourage dyads to become "triads" – groups of three people together with shared projects and common values. "Triads are the building blocks of Information that flows freely through networks and innovation enabling individuals to surrender. Surrender is the simple but profound wisdom of yielding to rather than opposing the flow of life. Surrender is not the same thing as resignation. One can surrender to the reality of a situation and still take steps to create a different path. The concept of "motivation" is very important and challenges the assumption that acceptance will lead to equality or a lack of motivation.

Equality is as undesirable as it is unrealizable. Attempting to achieve equality requires that each of us forego who we are and what we can do in order to create something in which no one ultimately believes - a society everybody is the same or has the same. let us by all means seek to increase opportunities for all. We have to proceed knowing to increase opportunities for all is likely to favor those better able to take advantage of them and may often first increase inequalities.

John Hagelin stood as a candidate for President of the United States for the Natural Law Party, a party founded by the Transcendental Meditation movement, in the 1992, 1996 and 2000 elections capturing a high of 23,000 votes in the year 2000. Dr. Hagelin said that research shows that traditional approaches to defense fail because they do not address the underlying cause of violence and conflict: they do not relieve the acute political, ethnic, and religious tensions that fuel terrorism and war. Hagelin states, "We need an effective means to eliminate these deep-seated tensions—a proven approach that can prevent violence and bloodshed and promote peace and prosperity in the world."

Yuval Noah Harari, who practices vipassana meditation is less optimistic and thinks modernity is a deal. Hariri said, “The entire contract can be summarized in a single phrase: humans agree to give up meaning in exchange for power.” Harari believes objective things exist independent of human consciousness, like radioactivity. Subjective things exist solely in one's imagination, like a child's imaginary friend, religion, money and corporations. “The inter-subjective is something that exists within the communication network linking the subjective consciousness of many individuals. If a single individual changes his or her beliefs, or even dies, it is of little importance. However, if most individuals in the network die or change their beliefs, the inter-subjective phenomenon will mutate or disappear.” Unequal results of human achievement conjure up simplistic notions of injustice. These perceived unfairness add to the challenges my business face today. Any small business owner worth their salt has to follow politics and current affairs closely as the decisions made at the seat of power aren’t simple and/or transparent. These acts naturally impact the future success of any business since ignorance is never a good excuse. The romantic idea of love and peace are noble and easily rationalized, but the last time I checked most landlords don’t accept hugs in lieu of rent. Lastly, the obstacles in American politics we most often can’t resolve are usually Republican and Democratic extreme ideologies. These circular arguments enable obstruction of fair governance and can be addressed by the transparent communication I advocate. There is room to go higher still. We should be able to be innovative to create new opportunities, allowing us to embark on history-making projects. This is how we end up changing the world for the better.

The most unfortunate thing regarding nihilism is not the loss of the ability to believe, but the inability to see the beauty, opportunities and possibilities of things and events occurring around us daily. Our success starts with the stories we tell ourselves since time heals griefs and quarrels, for we change and are no longer the same persons. Neither the offender nor the offended are any more themselves.

CHAPTER 10 - FASTEST WAY TO BUILD THE WALL

The fastest way to build the wall and promote my bleak outlook for 2019 is to seek-out factual information that confirms my biases. I'd encourage people to read Upton Sinclair's the Jungle that shows an earlier iteration of the news media that promoted mercantilism through yellow journalism. This early playbook of blatant lies and omissions are being reenacted today by Donald Trump and his administration's muckraking, while the 50 articles I've written on LinkedIn to encourage self reliance and mobilization go mostly unread. Could this be the reason why so many well intentioned individuals who oppose the Trump administration opt for the road of least resistance?

Media

Before the printing press was invented, word of mouth was the primary source of news. Returning merchants, sailors and travelers brought news back to the mainland, and this was then picked up by peddlers and traveling merchants and spread from town to town. This

transmission of news was highly unreliable, and died out with the invention of the printing press. By 1400, businessmen in Italian and German cities were compiling hand written chronicles of important news events, and circulating them to their business connections. The idea of using a printing press for this material first appeared in Germany around 1600. Magazines flourished after Napoleon left in 1815. Most were based in Paris and most emphasized literature, poetry and stories. They served religious, cultural and political communities. In times of political crisis they expressed and helped shape the views of their readership and thereby were major elements in the changing political culture. Theodore Roosevelt coined the term "muckraker" during a speech in 1906. He compared investigative reporters to the narrow-minded figure in John Bunyan's 17th-century religious fable, "The Pilgrim's Progress": the "man that could look no way but downwards, with a muckrake in his hand." To others during the Progressive Era, the term muckraker characterized reform-minded American journalists who attacked established institutions and leaders as corrupt. They typically had large audiences in some popular magazines. Yellow journalism/press presents little or no legitimate well-researched news while instead using eye-catching headlines for increased sales. Techniques may include exaggerations of news events, scandal-mongering, or sensationalism.

Mercantilism

Mercantilism is the economic theory that holds that the prosperity of a nation depends upon its supply of capital, and that the global trade is unchangeable. Capital is held by the state, is increased through balance of trade. Overall, they encourage exports and discourage imports, with the use of tariffs.

The 99%

Most people have an intuitive model of cooperative behavior that stems from two linked fears, one of being taken advantage of and another of under producing for lack of opportunities. Creating a way, a path, for us to work with citizens and government in a format that eliminates these ingrained fears by understanding both supply and demand is the primary goal. On the demand side, the commons situation encourages a race to the bottom by overuse—what economists call a congested–public-good problem. On the supply side, the commons rewards free-rider behavior—removing or diminishing incentives for individual actors to invest in developing more output. The tragedy of the commons predicts only three possible outcomes. One is the sea of mud many think we have today. Another is for some actor with coercive power to enforce an allocation policy on behalf of the village (the socialist/communist solution). The third is for the commons to break up as village members, fence-off bits they can defend and manage sustainably.

Building The Wall

2018 witnessed 3 government shutdowns. Currently, the President Of The United States forced the government to shutdown insisting we build a wall on the Mexico - US boarder. The support for the wall is another example of the tragedy of the commons whereas the demand for undocumented workers in certain industries in the U.S. creates incentive for others to cross the boarder which has led to the increase in illegal residents in the United States. On the supply side, many Americans don't know what to study in college, because no one knows what skills learned at 20 will be relevant at 40. The number of these somewhat useless citizens increases, not through chance but by definition diminishing incentives for this group to invest in developing additional skills in higher demand or outperforming undocumented workers in low skill work. Put another way, the fastest way Americans can build the wall is by outperforming undocumented workers in low skill industries. This will discourage others looking for work from crossing the Mexican border. Past Democratic or Republican administration's inability to address this is partly to blame for the immigration mess we have today.

The way things are

In the real world, we are not all equal and Donald Trump is the President of The United States. Access to most opportunities are subsidized by access to wealth. This is followed by how much of the sciences, engineering, technology, management and skills of labor an individual possesses coinciding with an individual's ability to learn, understand and articulate effectively these areas of study. The fourth and final step is to make the application and utilize our aptitude and abilities on things within our power. It's also very common for people to change the narrative they tell themselves regarding economic philosophies based upon experiences, education and self interest during their lifetime. The paradox of the stories we tell ourselves leads to all that is good and bad. During good moments, how we shape our narrative help us deal with the trauma we confront in life. Trauma rewires the brain and changes the way people experience the world. Trauma affects the mind and body immensely and prevents those affected from living in the present. So in essence, we are and become the stories we tell ourselves. Our internal narratives can also be dangerous if we're narrow minded, disregard constructive criticism and ego driven. We mustn't let our ego become a controlling factor in the way we act and make decisions. If this sounds like you, don't tell yourself a story. In such instances, the stories we tell ourselves are just labels that put us at odds not just with reality, but with the real strategy that made us successful in the first place. From that place, we might think that success in the future is just the natural next

part of the story-when really it’s rooted in work, creativity, persistence, and luck. Unfortunately, we have a serious shortage of super beings in America.

The way things should be

Instead of mimicking Donald Trump’s non-virtuous approach, we should seek to make open-source cooperation sustainable similar to what programmers do with software. Part of the answer certainly lies in the fact that using software does not decrease its value. Instead, widespread use of open-source software tends to increase its value, as users fold in their own fixes and features (code patches). In this inverse commons, the grass grows taller when it's grazed upon. That this public good cannot be degraded by overuse takes care of half of the congested–public-goods problem. It doesn't explain why open source doesn't suffer from under provision. Why don't people who know the open-source community exists universally exhibit free-rider behavior waiting for others to do the work they need, or (if they do the work themselves) not bothering to contribute the work back into the commons? Part of the answer lies in the fact that people don't merely need solutions, they need solutions on time. It's seldom possible to predict when someone else will finish a given piece of needed work. If the payoff from fixing a bug or adding a feature is sufficient to any potential contributor, that person will dive in and do it (at which point the fact that everyone else is a free rider becomes irrelevant). Another part of the answer lies in the fact that the putative market value of small patches to a common source base is hard to capture. Being reactive by only sitting on the patch gains nothing. Indeed, it incurs a future cost—the effort involved in re-merging the patch into the source base in each new release. So the payoff from this choice is actually negative. Instead of being pessimistic or optimistic while standing on the sidelines waiting for solutions to drop from the sky, I've written this easily accessible article hoping it encourages people to think. Suppose most readers realize my article has a monetary value; how do I collect from all those people? We all can win if we see money for what it really is, a social construct that promotes exchange through trust. To put it more positively, I gain from the reader’s input and potential input from different groups. I also gain because others will improve on my work in the future.

The road of least resistance

We should enable Americans to form habitual ways to meet certain needs or solve day-to-day problems instead of reading distracting tweets from the President. Tell yourself, “greatness is the perception that virtue is enough”. Unfortunately, the common person often lacks virtue, instead we avoid looking within ourselves to make self-improvements to increase our value in the free market. The weakest rebuttal to what I propose is that no market is absolutely free; a frail objection since all things exists in the margins. I advocate

for capitalism by arguing the economic pendulum should swing more in the direction of the free market in order to promote a better quality of life for the masses. Ideally, we could balance our lives, with clearly defined goals and a realistic understanding of outcome. Put another way, individuals must know and understand the probability and effectiveness of their actions in order to reach their goals. I think we need to be both constructively skeptical and virtuous while helping those in need. Since gauging need is subjective, it opens up the door for misinterpretation and disagreement regarding distribution. How do we qualify, quantify and communicate an individual's need? Who's the agent of interpretation?

These are 5 beliefs that should be avoided:

1. Citizens and government want different things.

2. Technique counts more than intent.

3. Solutions have inherent value (one size fits all)

4. Donald Trump ignores Methodology

5. World - class advocacy precedes world - class Inquiry (talking before listening) or a misinformed will to power approach.

Reversing these five key beliefs set the groundwork for a process that allows government to deal with undocumented workers and citizens in an honest, straightforward manner where we can discover all issues and needs, gather the hard information needed to create solutions that puts our country's sustainability above all else. This can be done without wasting time and resources by avoiding redundancies by utilizing available (unbiased) data.

CHAPTER 11 - HUMAN ACTION

Every time you find yourself complaining about the current political situation in the world while watching reality tv, take action instead of feeling somber. Envision yourself pioneering folkways sharing an ideology that combines the approach and lessons of Marcus Aurelius and Ludwig Von Mises to enable individuals a better understanding of their role in economics. Folkways are simple habits of action that are common to the members of the group; they are the ways of the folks that are somewhat standardized and have some degree of traditional sanction for their persistence. These are the customary, normal and habitual ways of the group to meet certain needs or solving day-to-day problems.

Marcus Aurelius, called the Philosopher, was Roman emperor from 161 to 180. He was the last of the rulers from that period traditionally known as the Five Good Emperors. Marcus Aurelius approach teaches us that greatness is the perception that virtue is enough. The common person often lacks virtue, instead we avoid looking within ourselves and making improvements. Our distractedness is apparent by how we devote too much effort seeking validation and social capital fighting external uncertainties instead. A modern version of Marcus Aurelius would write everyday insights to help him/her improve while ignoring these externalities. These writings wouldn’t be posted on social media; they’d be available

only to the author to listen on an app like Voice Dream, an accessible reading tool for mobile and tablet devices.

The same was true of Marcus Aurelius's 'Meditations', whose purpose and application was for personal clarity and not public benefit. This practice allows for the endurance of pain or hardship without a display of feelings and without complaint. Whereas, most of us fear the solitude of Marcus Aurelius's methods opting instead to seek validation and increased social capital through bonding, bridging and linking. Bonding can be described as the social support we may receive from the people we are close to as part of our backgrounds. Bridging can be described as the social cohesion between individuals and groups, bringing people together and possibly promote diversity. Lastly, 'linking', where the associations between those gaining independence and democratic lifestyles due to status are linked with those in authority or between different social classes, communities and organizations.

Ludwig Von Mises was an Austrian-American theoretical Austrian School economist. Mises wrote and lectured extensively on behalf of classical liberalism. He is best known for his work on praxeology, a study of human choice and action. Mises emigrated from Austria to the United States in 1940. Mises became a visiting professor at New York University and held this position from 1945 until his retirement in 1969, though he was not salaried by the university. Businessman and libertarian commentator Lawrence Fertig, a member of the New York University Board of Trustees, funded Mises and his work. At one time, Mises praised the work of writer Ayn Rand and she generally looked on his work with favor, but the two had a volatile relationship, with strong disagreements for example over the moral basis of capitalism.

Mises offered free seminars in the 1950's while teaching at NYU to like minded thinkers. I'm under the impression Mises encouraged his guests to challenge him and promoted a spirit of camaraderie, likened to being on a sports team. The weakest rebuttal to Mises's theory is that no market is absolutely free. This frail objection can apply to any and everything since all things exists in the margins. I'd advocate for capitalism by arguing the economic pendulum should swing more in the direction of the free market in order to promote a better quality of life for the masses. Ideally, we could balance our lives within the range of this pendulum, as long as we have clearly defined goals with a realistic understanding of outcome. Put another way, individuals must know and understand the probability and effectiveness of their actions in order to reach their goals.

I think the principles of private property and need are diametric opposites, both logically and in their social effects. When given a choice, individuals should concentrate most efforts on private property. It's easy to gauge the outcome of efforts to produce goods or services in

exchange for money to realize desired “quality of life.” Desired or “good quality of life” is based on the need principle, subjective and fluid. The first of a four-step approach or action is determined by access to more opportunities because of wealth. The second is determined by how much of the sciences, engineering, technology, management and skills of labor an individual possesses. The third is determined by one’s ability to learn, understand and articulate effectively these areas of study. The fourth and final step is to make the application and utilize our aptitude and abilities on things within our power (praxeology).

In the real world, we are not all equal. It’s also very common for people to change economic philosophies based upon experiences, education and self interest during their lifetime. Mises and the Austrian school are correct to build economic mental models from the customer’s perspective. The choices we make affect our bottom line. I think we have to transparently communicate a minimum threshold to apply the principle of need to help the needy with Marcus Aurelius type virtue. Since gauging the needy is subjective, it opens up the door for misinterpretation and conflict regarding distribution. How do we qualify and quantify need? What is the definition of humane and who is the agent of interpretation? Can the constant leaps of faith required to evolve as we learn these things seem scary? Seem discouraging? Keep us from reaching our full potential as individuals? Make many of us opt to lead reactive lives? We have to continue to be constructively skeptical while taking comfort in the words of Baruch Spinoza who wrote, “Be not astonished at new ideas; for it is well known to you that a thing does not therefore cease to be true because it is not accepted by many”.

I think arriving to America in his sixties gave Ludwig Von Mises cause for urgency regarding his teaching. I use a similar approach to teach individuals the principle of private property combined with a Marcus Aurelias virtuous approach addressing the principle of need (with no expectation of gratitude). How many people today, can envision a Michael Bloomberg Presidential election victory in 2020? This is possible if Bloomberg's 2020 message addresses all economic questions while simultaneously appealing to the decency of the common person.

CHAPTER 12 - WHY I'M RUNNING

I have made ceaseless efforts not to ridicule or scorn the US President's actions, but to understand them. Underwhelmed, on January 2018 I started collecting signatures to run for US President in 2020. I'm moved to action because I fear self-complacency is no longer an option. Despite having doubts, I'm being proactive instead of complaining. Fear cannot be without hope nor hope without fear. I worry if I have to fight monsters; I have to make sure that in the process not to become a monster myself. I'm aware of my ego in the event I obtain much public attention, fame and notoriety may have great drawbacks, that if I pursue them, I may direct my life so as to please the fancy of public opinion; It may easily come to pass I imagine myself pleasing to all when in reality I become a universal nuisance.

To better myself, I've been reading the writings of men who've inspired American Presidents I admire. Theodore Parker, referred to by Abraham Lincoln in many of the President's speeches was such a man. Theodore Parker was born in Lexington, Massachusetts, the youngest child in a large farming family. Most of Theodore's family had died by the time he was 27, probably due to tuberculosis. His mother, to whom he was emotionally close, died

when he was eleven. He responded to these tragedies by refusing to lapse into what he called "the valley of tears," focusing instead on other events and demands, and by affirming "the immortality of the soul," later a benchmark of his theology. Parker famously said, “Since the 16th century, Lady Justice has often been depicted wearing a blindfold. The blindfold represents impartiality, the ideal that justice should be applied without regard to wealth, power, or other status.”

On the same day, I watched a Dave Chapelle comedy special on Netflix . In it Dave suggested “If you want to know how things really are in America you should read "Pimp" By Iceberg Slim.

Iceberg Slim writes “Why did Justice really always wear a blindfold? I knew now. It was because the cunning bitch had dollar signs for eyeballs”. Unfortunately, Dave Chapelle is spot on. Despite improbable odds of becoming President Of The United States, I will continue to fight and resist. In my opinion, if you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.

American citizens and US residents who disagree with Trump’s policies have to avoid being reluctant to work or be unreliable. If you’re undependable, it doesn’t matter what your values are, no serious person is going to trust you. Change starts from within. Before we complain, let's do like Theodore Parker and continue to put in the work everyday. Our movement will consist of citizens who choose to be proactive, realistic and optimistic.

CHAPTER 13 - SCHULTZ HAS TO BE FOR REAL IN 2020

The biggest challenges one faces trying to become an Independently thinking President are: most people don't know who you are, followed by being flawed and ignoring your biases. Most candidate's life story aren't part of the national narrative made up of new and old stories. This subjective phenomenon exists only in the imagination of each individual. It can change as that single individual changes. Thus, a person thinking she should be President or a Democratic supporter's disapproval of a candidate disappears when they cease to believe in it. This phenomenon exists within the communication networks that link the subjective consciousness of many individuals within a community. The inter-subjective is made up of the things in which many individuals, within the larger community (Democrats, Republicans, Independent), believe. Thus if an individual changes his or her beliefs it makes little to no difference to the beliefs of the community as a whole. Likened to the 'Allegory Of The Cave' a theory put forward by Plato, concerning human perception. Plato claimed that

knowledge gained through the senses is no more than opinion and that, in order to have real knowledge, we must gain it through philosophical reasoning.

The inter-subjective has no actual existence within the natural world in the same way that radioactivity does. It is made up of the socially constructed ideas that exist in our collective imagination. Nevertheless the impact of the inter-subjective on the world is enormous: law, money, gods, nations, the notion of human rights and justice are all examples of inter-subjective phenomenon. I think it is preferable for society to support human rights and justice rather than lawlessness. The constant battles between groups promoting their own socially constructed narratives (Democrats, Republicans, religion) accompanied with a naively altruistic belief the majority of people of their respective generation will choose to be wiser through self discovery. Can this really create an inner peace for all, putting an end to feeling threatened and wanting to survive at all cost? Needing drama in order to assert its identity as the victorious character like in a movie? Beware, these feelings create the biggest pitfalls and challenges to a more peaceful existence. If things are to improve continually, we must take a multi-disciplinary approach to how we think. Sharing these abstract beliefs is only possible if we believe in the rule of law promoting individual liberty. The greatest danger is having good laws administered badly.

Independent Representation

Back in 2016, despite months of feuding between the Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton campaigns, and the establishment politicians who perpetuate a system that many feel is rigged against the voters, the senator decided to quietly accept the hard electoral math: On the eve of the California primary, Clinton earned enough delegates to technically clinch the Democratic presidential nomination. But after initial protestations from Sanders and his adherents — and with the prospect of the Democratic caucus plunging into an all-out brawl at the party convention — the Sanders campaign correctly decided to play ball for the sake of the party. Despite defeat, Sanders campaign energized the extreme left of the Democratic party giving new politicians like Alexandria Ocasio Cortez the opportunity to promote a socialist solution.

Despite my best intentions, I’m not immune from bias. Through confirmation bias most of us favor information that confirms our beliefs. This bias manifests in many ways. When sifting through evidence, individuals tend to value anything that agrees with them -- no matter how inconsequential -- & instantly discount that which doesn't. They also interpret ambiguous information as supporting their beliefs. Most people have an intuitive model of cooperative behavior that stems from two linked fears, one of being taken advantage of and another of under producing for lack of opportunities. On the demand side, the commons

situation encourages a race to the bottom by overuse—what economists call a congested–public-good problem. On the supply side, the commons rewards free-rider behavior—removing or diminishing incentives for individual actors to invest in developing more output. The tragedy of the commons predicts only three possible outcomes. One is the sea of mud many think we have today. Another is for some actor with coercive power to enforce an allocation policy on behalf of the village (the socialist solution). The third is for the commons to break up as village members, fence-off bits they can defend and manage sustainably. In the United States, It's very common for people to change the narrative they tell themselves regarding economic philosophies based upon experiences, education and self interest during their lifetime.

The absence of sensible political representation has clouded the American dream by Democrat and Republican extremists. As a result, we now have an underwhelming being occupying the White House. Ideally, the President of the United States is cast in the role of subordinate agent, seeking in "good faith" to carry out the instructions of the lawmakers for the people, who is understood to be the principal. Instead, we're harshly and repeatedly reminded we're not all equal. Access to most opportunities are subsidized by access to wealth. The Trump administration's hiring practice at times ignores much of the sciences, engineering, technology, management and skills of labor an individual possesses coinciding with an individual's ability to learn, understand and articulate effectively these areas of study. Unequal results of human achievement conjure up simplistic notions of injustice, akin to a Trump discourse at one of his political rallies. Trump fails to encourage an American society in which the dignity of each person - not one's station, or employment, or the accumulation of goods - is the prime consideration, equality of opportunity can exist. Regardless, individuals most often learn these harsh truths through self discovery in the pursuit of relative financial sustainability. Unfortunately, prior to self discovery, human impulse is generally towards equality or generosity. Equality is as undesirable as it is unrealizable. Attempting to achieve equality requires that each of us forego who we are and what we can do in order to create something in which no one ultimately believes - a society everybody is the same or has the same. let us by all means seek to increase opportunities for all. We have to proceed knowing to increase opportunities for all is likely to favor those better able to take advantage of them and may often first increase inequalities.

The Servant Leader Process

In January of 2018 I started collecting signatures to run for President as an Independent after posting a Facebook rant disapproving the first government shutdown. Since February 2018, I've written 54 articles on LinkedIn to help get my message out. Two weeks ago,

Howard Schultz released his book, “ From The Ground Up” and began a talking tour in order to decide if he’ll run for President as an Independent candidate. Regardless of who wins, we have to create transparent processes that can exist in perpetuity. These are my 5 beliefs as a servant leader,

1. Citizens and government want the same things.

2. Technique counts less than intent.

3. Solutions don’t have inherent value (one size doesn't fit all)

4. We all Should Promote Methodology

5. World - class inquiry precedes world - class advocacy

Disadvantages of socialism include slow economic growth, less entrepreneurial opportunity and competition, and a potential lack of motivation by individuals due to lesser rewards. Alexandria Ocasio Cortez 70% tax rate for high income earners, comes to mind. Whereas, the Trump administration has been an aberration, an outrage, but most of all, a great big fraud. Voters who thought President Trump would at least try to fulfill his populist, America-first campaign promises are still waiting. Trump placates these supporters with rhetoric, distracts them with cultural warfare and encourages them to seek refuge in cultural chauvinism. Both Ms. Cortez and Mr. Trump’s ideas are half truths and smoke-and-mirrors of often repeated Republican and Democratic economic policy talking points.

Instead, Americans should seek to make open-source cooperation sustainable through servant leader beliefs similar to what programmers do with software. Part of the answer certainly lies in the fact that using software does not decrease its value. Instead, widespread use of open-source software tends to increase its value, as users fold in their own fixes and features (code patches). In this inverse commons, the grass grows taller when it's grazed upon. That this public good cannot be degraded by overuse takes care of half of the congested–public-goods problem. It doesn't explain why open source doesn't suffer from under provision. Why don't people who know the open-source community exists universally exhibit free-rider behavior waiting for others to do the work they need, or (if they do the work themselves) not bothering to contribute the work back into the commons? Part of the answer lies in the fact that people don't merely need solutions, they need solutions on time. It's seldom possible to predict when someone else will finish a given piece of needed work. If the payoff from fixing a bug or adding a feature is sufficient to any potential contributor, that person will dive in and do it (at which point the fact that everyone else is a free rider becomes irrelevant). Another part of the answer lies in the fact that the putative market

value of small patches to a common source base is hard to capture. Being reactive by only sitting on the patch gains nothing. Instead, it incurs a future cost—the effort involved in re-merging the patch into the source base in each new release. So the payoff from not being a participant is actually negative.

Conclusion

Donald Trump's recent attempt to circumvent the constitution and congress by declaring a national emergency to build a wall highlights the need for a centrist process in America. The biggest corrupters of our republic are not thievery or Russian collusion. The stink we most often can’t locate is usually disguised as Republican and Democratic extreme ideologies. These circular ideas are rationalized intellectually resulting in obstruction of fair governance. Regardless, we must continue to have faith in our tricameral government. We must focus on being the change we want to see in the world. Unfortunately, most of us lose sight of the expected outcome of our actions.

Are you a selfless person? Would you refuse a promotion you desire to a more capable team member for the greater good? While striving for change, we mustn't let our ego's become a controlling factor in the way we act and make decisions. So don’t tell yourself a story. The stories we tell ourselves are just labels that put us at odds not just with reality, but with the real strategy that made us successful in the first place. From that place, we might think that success in the future is just the natural next part of the story—when really it’s rooted in a process made up of work, creativity, persistence, and luck. All processes within time, may work better, worse, cease to work or change. Individuals with power to influence a process can be the process’s best friends and worst enemies.

The five key beliefs of a servant leader set the groundwork for a process that allows government to deal with complicated issues (immigration, free markets, externalities) in an honest, straightforward manner where we can discover all issues and needs, gather the hard information needed to create solutions that puts our country’s sustainability above all else. Accepting what is (I may not be the best person for a job), is the first step to create an accurate plan to proactive leadership. Proactive behavior involves acting in advance of a future situation, rather than just reacting. The task of objectively seeing yourself can be difficult. Before a person can lead others he/she has to lead him/herself through surrender. Surrender is not the same thing as resignation. One can surrender to the reality of a situation and still take steps to create a different path. The concept of “motivation” is very important for a leader and challenges the assumption that acceptance will lead to a lack of motivation. I think we can experience a more effective motivation when we surrender. I prefer to be inspired by Howard Schultz's well thought out plan than by anxiety.

CHAPTER 14 - BROOKLYN'S FOOD COOP MEMBERS WILL "M.A.G.A."

Among the benefits of membership at the Park Slope food coop are the stories and lessons members share with one another after they're done working. Depending on who you talk to, what will make America great again varies. I believe Donald Trump and the enabling Republican party have been an aberration, an outrage, but most of all, a great big fraud. Voters who thought President Trump would at least try to fulfill his populist, America-first campaign promises are still waiting. Trump placates these supporters with rhetoric, distracts them with cultural warfare and encourages them to seek refuge in cultural chauvinism. Whereas, unequal results of human achievement conjure up simplistic notions of injustice for Democrats. "The Blue Party" most often learn these harsh truths through self discovery in the pursuit of relative financial sustainability or while soliciting project funding.

Unfortunately, prior to self discovery, human impulse is generally towards equality or generosity. Equality is as undesirable as it is unrealizable. Attempting to achieve equality requires that each of us forego who we are and what we can do in order to create something in which no one ultimately believes - a society everybody is the same or has the same. Lastly, the media enabled Trump's rise to power and the Democrats pursuit of an equality message. Mindfulness, good intentions and integrity are romantically appealing (sexy), but are at a disadvantage with what's reported in the news by the complicity of the media with advertisers and publicists. Today, even at the local level, the government, corporations, big institutions and personalities know how to play the media game. They know how to influence the news narrative. They feed media scoops, official accounts, interviews with the 'experts'. They make themselves crucial to the process of journalism. So, those in power and

those who report on them are in bed with each other and only pay lip service to individuals who seek "the truth”.

As a result of this, given human's flawed nature, we're left with three possible outcomes. One is the sea of mud many think we have today. Another is for actors with coercive power to enforce an allocation policy on behalf of the people. The third is for the commons to break up as village members, fence-off bits they can defend and manage sustainably. These three groups often lack empathy and instead of listening and talking to each other, they opt to talk through each other with the use of prepared talking points.

Last week, Through my coop squad leader Eric Eisenstadt, I learned Thomas S. Kuhn coined the term paradigm shift in his book, "The Structure Of Scientific Revolution", a book about the history of science. Its publication was a landmark event in the history, philosophy, and sociology of scientific knowledge. Back in 2016, Eric put a sign on his classroom door that read: 'I love all of my students and I will fight for you, no matter what (https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-3946116/If-bui...). I also experienced a change in approach and outlook when Eric asked, "How do you resolve conflicts in cases all parties are complicit, as in the case of Donald Trump, The GOP, Democrats and the media?

After thinking it through, I've come up with a course of action for those of us willing to put in the work. We should seek to make open-source cooperation sustainable similar to what programmers do with software. Part of the answer certainly lies in the fact that using software does not decrease its value. Instead, widespread use of open-source software tends to increase its value, as users fold in their own fixes and features (code patches). In this inverse commons, the grass grows taller when it's grazed upon. That this public good cannot be degraded by overuse takes care of half of the congested–public-goods problem. It doesn't explain why open source doesn't suffer from under provision. Why don't people who know the open-source community exists universally exhibit free-rider behavior waiting for others to do the work they need, or (if they do the work themselves) not bothering to contribute the work back into the commons? Part of the answer lies in the fact that people don't merely need solutions, they need solutions on time. It's seldom possible to predict when someone else will finish a given piece of needed work. If the payoff from fixing a bug or adding a feature is sufficient to any potential contributor, that person will dive in and do it (at which point the fact that everyone else is a free rider becomes irrelevant). Another part of the answer lies in the fact that the putative market value of small patches to a common source base is hard to capture. Being reactive by only sitting on the patch gains nothing. Instead, it incurs a future cost—the effort involved in re-merging the patch into the source base in each new release. So the payoff from this choice is actually negative.

Let us by all means seek to increase opportunities for all. Democrats in particular, have to do a better job of acknowledging and/or recognizing we have to proceed knowing to increase opportunities for all is likely to favor those better able to take advantage of them and may often first increase inequalities. That means taking risks, something the Democratic Party establishment has a hard time understanding. Before you can win on progressive ideas and show they work, you have to communicate them. I'm inspired by the words of Algeron Sidney, "Our inquiry is not after that which is perfect, well knowing that no such thing is found among men; but we seek that human constitution which is attended with the least, or the most pardonable inconveniences".

CHAPTER 15 - AMERICA WILL ELECT A "GREATER FOOL" IN 2020

Our political lives would benefit if voters had a greater awareness of some of the critical economic paradoxes that underpin our society. Our goal shouldn’t be perfection, we should strive to do the greatest good through the most pardonable inconveniences. Are we deserving of a President who will have a perfect blend of self-delusion and ego to think that he/she can succeed where others have failed? Throughout history, politics has enabled disingenuousness with the media and the voters. Washington is inundated by legal distractions, investigations, blatant omissions, lack of transparency and poor communication. Despite this, our savviest politicians are aware of the impossibility theorem, a concept in social choice theory that proves when voters have three or more differentiated choice or options, the absence of ranked order voting system can lead to rankled preferences of individuals over a community-wide ranking in addition to meeting a pre-specified set of criteria. This concept affects the political process by treating all

conceivable rules under a common framework. This provides the meaningful tool for expressing social welfare.

Despite all that's negative in the world today, an economic era of enlightenment is possible since the major difference between mass media and social media is; the mass media puts the audience in a passive position. Social media puts the voters at the center and with work, could do a better job at producing a more informed populace and higher voter turnouts. Through social media, it's possible to implement campaigns that interacts with existing and potential voters.

Instead of getting distracted by outrageous tweets, voters should get acquainted with the list of economic paradoxes. Afterwards, voters should list the top three paradoxes they believe are impacting our country and indicate where to draw the line for each. Reading the latter has made me aware of the danger of tyranny that inevitably results from government control of economic decision-making through central planning. I believe the disparity in the division of wealth should be addressed by allowing a polytheistic approach in the future since the current conservative two party system makes it tempting to equate the opposition as evil. Self imposed biases have hampered many of us from understanding the value and validity of having an open mind. How do we get better at something we don't think we're bad at? We should have the greatest reason to be grateful to those with differing views for saying so well what our biases prevent us from seeing and/or understanding.

Economists believe the line is between free-enterprise and planning, and that the logical extremes are not possible. Most politicians and economists' inability to be forthcoming and transparent isn't a coincidence. One has to be selfless and egoless to give perfect guidance as to where to draw the line since it exposes your preferences and biases. On occasions lines are drawn, voters would probably draw lines in different places. But as soon as you admit that the extreme is not possible, and that a line has to be drawn, you are, on your own argument, done for since you are trying to persuade us that as soon as one moves an inch in the planned direction you are necessarily launched on the slippery path which will lead you in due course over the economic cliff.

This avoidance of drawing the line explains politics as usual and the economic cliché "on the other-hand" . In other words, no one wants to talk first since the first rule of negotiation states that if you are the first one to state a number then you have set the anchor and the negotiation will revolve around that number. As the "Greatest Fool", I believe the other two economic paradoxes people should understand are Mandeville's paradox and Mayfield's Paradox.

Conclusion: We are use to thinking very highly of democracy – and by extension, of Ancient Athens, the civilization that gave rise to it. The Parthenon has become almost a byword for democratic values, which is why so many leaders of democracies like to be photographed among its ruins. It's therefore very striking to discover that one of Ancient Greece's great achievements, Philosophy, was highly suspicious of its other achievement, Democracy. In the dialogues of Plato, the founding father of Greek Philosophy – Socrates – is portrayed as hugely pessimistic about the whole business of democracy. In Book Six of The Republic,

Plato describes Socrates falling into conversation with a character called Adeimantus and trying to get him to see the flaws of democracy by comparing a society to a ship. If you were heading out on a journey by sea, asks Socrates, who would you ideally want deciding who was in charge of the vessel? Just anyone or people educated in the rules and demands of seafaring? The latter of course, says Adeimantus, so why then, responds Socrates, do we keep thinking that any old person should be fit to judge who should be a ruler of a country? Socrates's point is that voting in an election is a skill, not a random intuition. And like any skill, it needs to be taught systematically to people. Letting the citizenry vote without an education is as irresponsible as putting them in charge of a trireme sailing to Samos in a storm. Socrates was to have first hand, catastrophic experience of the foolishness of voters. In 399 BC, the philosopher was put on trial on trumped up charges of corrupting the youth of Athens. A jury of 500 Athenians was invited to weigh up the case and decided by a narrow margin that the philosopher was guilty. He was put to death by hemlock in a process which is, for thinking people, every bit as tragic as Jesus's condemnation has been for Christians. Crucially, Socrates was not elitist in the normal sense. He didn't believe that a narrow few should only ever vote. He did, however, insist that only those who had thought about issues rationally and deeply should be let near a vote. We have forgotten this distinction between an intellectual democracy and a democracy by birthright. We have given the vote to all without connecting it to that of wisdom. And Socrates knew exactly where that would lead: to a system the Greeks feared above all, demagoguery.

In Praise of Bias: A presumption among many thoughtful people is that the great enemy of a good life and a decent world is something called 'bias'. By bias, people have come to understand a twisting of the facts towards dark and entirely nefarious ends. According to this interpretation, bias is invariably and necessarily bad. In some quarters, the word has simply grown synonymous with evil. In order to hate bias so much, one has to love the idea of something else with equal passion: 'the facts'. People hate bias because they ultimately believe in the redemptive possibility of something completely objective, and scientifically verifiable. Loathing of bias is the flip side of faith in facts.

Facts evidently exist in many areas of life. Science and many of the human sciences are beautifully based on evidence-based, fact-yielding work. The problem is that in many of the most important aspects of existence, there simply are no 'facts' available. The big questions that bedevil us, individually and collectively, have no facts to appeal to. – How should we live? – What is the right economic system to institute? – What sort of relationships should we have? – What choices should we make? – Who are we and what do we want and need? In the face of such dilemmas, we may well long for facts – by which we really mean, answers we can be assured will be indisputably correct. But we invariably face ambiguity and, whatever answers we formulate, a degree of loss, and the risk of blindness and error. It is these elements which the haters of bias are, deep down, especially intolerant towards and upset about. Their hatred of bias reflects a longing for a world without a need for hard choices and the sacrifice these necessarily entail. We may well long to 'stick to facts,' but we eventually have to try to lead our lives according to values, which are inherently much more contentious and complicated structures. There is no merely fact-based road to a good and contented life. The passion against bias often comes to a head in our thinking about news organizations. In certain circles, there is a particular loathing for what is termed biased news – and a belief in the option of decent news organizations which are going to always and inherently be unbiased.

Unfortunately, there is simply no way of providing factual, 'unbiased' answers to the really big issues facing societies. News organizations that vaunt their neutrality forget that neutrality is simply impossible vis a vis the really urgent questions confronting our civilization. The word 'bias' ultimately simply alludes to the business of having a 'take' on existence. One may have a better or worse take, but one needs a take. One needs eventually to tackle the question of what is important, just, worth striving for. If news or information or even philosophy are to matter to us, really matter, they will have to be presented to us by organizations that have tried to think through the ends of human life, that have a vision of where we are trying to go as a species, and that have somewhere articulated their answers to their audiences. The issue is not – therefore – the illusory and timid one between bias and fact but between better and worse varieties of bias.

CHAPTER 16 - THE 2019 PUERTO RICAN REVOLUTION

Puerto Ricans, let's look at ourselves in the mirror now that governor Ricky resigned. It is not what you say, what matters is what you do and how you live your life. Model the behavior you want for your children and the rest will take care of itself. For my part, I have trained (120 games season) of baseball for adolescent children (not members of my family) mostly from New York City from 1997 to 2011. I gave love, time, professional advice and fostered a sense of self-regulation to the members of Youth Service League and the New York Grays Baseball organization; while simultaneously requiring members to be accountable and to have high expectations for themselves on and off the field. Not all children can be professional baseball players, but all children can become respectful, punctual, professional hardworking employees or entrepreneurs.

In 2012, my family opened an organic juice bar in my Park Slope Brooklyn neighborhood where I currently work 7 days a week. Despite growing up in a single-parent home, I learned

to express myself through writing and in key ways, playing, coaching baseball and the thought process involved in writing have filled the void created by my absent father. I often write with the hope of being a male role model for other children without a dad, young adults that we find listening to music all over the island, hanging out in shopping centers, bars, posting on blogs, podcasts and videos online. These people use services such as Google and YouTube to easily access endless Instagram influencer tips with thousands of followers or more. The drawback of this approach is the rating of the strength and credentials of the advisors. The philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632 - 1677) is famous for saying: “Do not be surprised at new ideas; because it is well known that a thing doesn’t cease to be true because it is not accepted by many." I worry that well-intentioned advice is often counterproductive when projecting the adviser's weaknesses. Despite the best intentions, any advice has limitations regarding perception and enlightenment. The amount of information disclosed to the person from whom the advice is requested and the adviser's ability to conceptualize, describe and communicate the best course of action will determine the usefulness of the advice. Growing up in the Bronx, (70s and 80s), people would say: "once people start making money, they rarely return to the community, they move and disappear. That's why it's better to be feared than to be loved, "a saying coined in" The Prince "by Niccolo Machiavelli. Despite the popularity of the book, I think" The Prince "was probably the worst job application in history and sometimes the political play book of Donald Trump, although it did not succeed in it’s original purpose. Unfortunately for Machiavelli, he was not a very discreet person, but he did write about the world the way he saw it and did not sugarcoat the story trying to win over Lorenzo (the Prince), Lorenzo for his part, did not want to hear all kinds of unsolicited advice on how to maintain power.

The difference between "The Prince" and "The Stories I Tell Myself" is the intended audience. In this book, I write for myself in search of awareness, growth and enlightenment. I am the most frequent reader of my writings, because I think it is better to be loved than to be feared. I am not afraid of people benefiting from my ideas without being paid or validated. I agree with the fact that most people show free rider behavior while waiting for externalities and other people to do the work they need, or (if they do the work themselves) they don't share hoping that more members of the community become aware through self-discovery. Part of the answer lies in the fact that we’re not merely in need of a lucid moment of self-awareness, we should strive towards ongoing self-awareness. It’s rarely possible to predict when another person will have an epiphany. Once we realize that the reward of doing the work is enough, I hope more of us see value in my approach (at that moment, the fact that everyone else did not participate in the effort becomes irrelevant). Being reactive just waiting for others to do the job, avoiding thinking about issues rationally has no benefit. In fact, it incurs a future cost: you deceive yourself by using a "straw man" argument instead of

an "iron man" argument. Instead of presenting someone's argument in its weakest form through introspection, we should try to present those we disagree with argument in its strongest form. So the reward of doing nothing is negative.

Machiavelli in his personal life (turbulent times) did not realize that we can all win if we see money for what it really is, a social construct that promotes exchange through trust. To put it more positively, we benefit from the contributions of different groups and individuals. The contributions and views of others will improve our work in the future, which will help us improve things that we may not be conscious of. In the end, Niccolo Machiavelli considered his life a failure. Whereas, even though I hardly knew my father, I consider myself a cheerful self-taught person who is happier reading the philosophers' biographies, training baseball, preparing and selling organic juices in my community. Baruch Spinoza was a lens grinder who intellectually found feelings of freedom in writing for himself at a time when his contemporaries were being censored, persecuted and killed for expressing ideas more conservative than his. Spinoza wrote freely without ego or fear of censorship because he knew that he could not distribute his writings without reprisals. Today, censorship works by flooding us with immense amounts of erroneous information, irrelevant information, videos of people who fall, until we are simply unable to focus. We know Spinoza because he left instructions for his writings to be made public after his death. Of the hundreds of children I have trained in the last 20 years, those who made it to the major leagues (Adam Ottavino, Harrison Bader, Pedro Beato, James Norwood) chose to have a proactive belief in themselves; While training these young people, I learned self belief is a choice individuals can only make for themselves. In essence, what you believe in your heart is who you are and what you become.

Today, the United States has a president who promotes fear by exploiting the inability of most people to deal with things rationally when history and emotions are involved. The uneven results of human achievements evoke simplistic notions of injustice that can cause people to misunderstand the best actions that require difficult decisions. Any citizen with a proactively civic mentality has to closely follow current politics and affairs, since the decisions made at the seat of power are neither simple nor transparent. These acts naturally affect the future success of the country and require continuous attention. I recognize that my life is in process and what works for me may not work for another person. Regardless of the person, we must be responsible, transparent and surrender to our individual realities. We all have to deal with our ability to do good and evil. Many of us set ourselves up for defeat because we are not willing to recognize the destructive side of our being. Opting instead to create counterproductive narratives in our heads instead of pursuing the difficult task of seeing ourselves objectively. Regardless of whether you grew up with a father or not,

you are the author of the stories you tell yourself. I choose to see myself as the epitome of the American dream despite the realities of my family life. Or should I create a narrative to rationalize and justify choices and behaviors that are counterproductive?

I often find myself in situations of wanting to help spread a message of universal love, realistic hope and awareness. I choose to write despite not knowing what all children without dad would need. I'd like to help them all and yet I have no real idea of what I can plausibly offer; I hope that most have not given up and that their minds are not impenetrable and opaque. I think we all have a super power, an ability to give people something that we can be sure about that we need, based on a fundamental and basic vision of human nature: that we all have a deep need for tranquility. That said, I find comments against most absent fathers accompanied by a sense of insecurity and, under excellent camouflage, to a greater or lesser extent, sadness. If this sounds like you, you are not alone. Despite not having grown up with my father and most of the time telling myself that our relationship was irreparable, I followed my own advice and called my father on Father's Day 2014. I could hear the joy in his fragile voice. We had both lost more than 75 pounds since our last meeting (me through a vegan lifestyle and he as a side effect of prostate cancer). During the next few weeks I talked to my dad regularly. He died six weeks after the only Father's Day we shared. I'm glad I could say goodbye.

CHAPTER 16 (ESPANOL) EL ESPEJO Y LA REVOLUCION DE PUERTO RICO

Puertorriqueños, vamos a mirarnos en el espejo ya que el gobernador renuncio. No es lo que dices, lo que importa es lo que haces y cómo vives tu vida. Modele el comportamiento que desea para sus hijos y el resto se hará cargo de sí mismo. De mi parte, he entrenado (temporada de 120 juegos) de béisbol para niños adolescentes (no miembros de mi familia) en su mayoría de la ciudad de Nueva York desde 1997 hasta 2011. Di amor, tiempo, consejos profesionales y fomenté un sentido de autorregulación a los miembros de Youth Service League y la organización New York Grays Baseball; mientras simultáneamente le exige a los miembros que rindan cuentas y que tengan altas expectativas para sí mismos dentro y fuera del campo. No todos los niños pueden ser jugadores profesionales de béisbol, pero todos los niños pueden llegar a ser empleados o empresarios puntuales, profesionales, respetuosos y trabajadores. En 2012, mi familia abrió un bar de jugos orgánicos en mi vecindario de Park Slope Brooklyn donde actualmente trabajo 7 días a la semana. A pesar de haber crecido en un hogar de padres solteros, aprendí a expresarme a través de la escritura y, de manera clave,

el juego, el entrenamiento de béisbol y el proceso de pensamiento involucrado en la escritura han llenado el vacío creado por mi padre ausente. A menudo escribo con la esperanza de ser un modelo a seguir para otros niños sin padre, adultos jóvenes que encontramos escuchando música en toda la isla, pasando el rato en centros comerciales, bares, publicando en blogs, podcast y videos en línea. Estas personas utilizan servicios como Google y Youtube para acceder fácilmente a un sinfín de consejos de influencias de Instagram con miles de seguidores o más. Lo inconveniente de este enfoque es la calificación de la solidez y las credenciales de los asesores. El filósofo Baruch Spinoza (1632 - 1677) es famoso por decir: “No te sorprendas ante nuevas ideas; porque es bien sabido que una cosa no deja de ser cierta porque muchos no la aceptan. "Me preocupa que los consejos bien intencionados sean a menudo contraproducentes cuando proyectan las deficiencias del asesor.

A pesar de las mejores intenciones, cualquier consejo tiene limitaciones con respecto a la percepción y la iluminación. La cantidad de información que revele a la persona de quién se solicita el asesoramiento y la capacidad del asesor para conceptualizar, describir y comunicar el mejor curso de acciones determinará la utilidad del asesoramiento. Al crecer en el Bronx, (años 70 y 80), la gente diría: "una vez que las personas comienzan a ganar dinero, rara vez devuelven a la comunidad, se mudan y nunca más se vuelven a escuchar. Por eso es mejor ser temido que ser amado ", un dicho acuñado en "El Príncipe” por Niccolo Maquiavelo. A pesar de la popularidad del libro, creo que "The Prince" fue probablemente la peor solicitud de empleo en la historia y, a veces, el libro de jugadas de Donald Trump, a pesar de que no tuvo éxito en su propósito original. Desafortunadamente para Maquiavelo, como el actual presidente de EE. UU., No era una persona muy discreta, pero sí escribió sobre el mundo de la manera en que lo vio y no endulzó el cuento tratando de ganarse el favor de Lorenzo (el Príncipe). Sin embargo, Lorenzo no quería escuchar todo tipo de consejos no solicitados sobre cómo mantener el poder.

La diferencia entre "El Príncipe" y "The Stories I Tell Myself" es la audiencia prevista. En mi libro, escribo para mí en busca de conciencia, crecimiento y iluminación. Soy el lector más frecuente de mis escritos, porque creo que es mejor ser amado que ser temido. No tengo miedo de que las personas se beneficien de mis ideas sin que me paguen o validen. Estoy de acuerdo con el hecho de que la mayoría de las personas muestran un comportamiento de usuario libre a la espera de que las externalidades y otras personas hagan el trabajo que necesitan, o (si hacen el trabajo ellos mismos) no compartan esperando que los de mas de su comunidad se vuelvan conscientes a través del autodescubrimiento. Parte de la respuesta radica en el hecho de que no todos estamos meramente necesitados de un momento lúcido de autoconciencia, necesitamos la autoconciencia continuamente. Rara vez es posible

predecir cuándo otras personas tendrán una epifanía. Una vez que nos damos cuenta de que la recompensa de hacer el trabajo es suficiente, espero que más de nosotros nos sumergamos y despertemos (en ese momento, el hecho de que todos los demás no participaron en el esfuerzo se vuelve irrelevante). Ser reactivo solo esperando que otros hagan el trabajo, evitando pensar en temas racionalmente no tiene beneficio. De hecho, incurre en un costo futuro: usted se engaña al utilizar un argumento del "hombre de paja" en lugar de un argumento del "hombre de hierro". En lugar de presentar el argumento de alguien en su forma más débil a través de la introspección, deberíamos tratar de presentar el argumento de alguien en su forma más fuerte. Así que la recompensa de esta elección es realmente negativa.

Maquiavelo en su vida personal (tiempos turbulentos) no se dio cuenta de que todos podemos ganar si vemos el dinero por lo que realmente es, una construcción social que promueve el intercambio a través de la confianza. Para decirlo más positivamente, nos beneficiamos de las aportaciones de diferentes grupos e individuos. Los aportes y los puntos de vista de los demás mejorarán nuestro trabajo en el futuro, lo que nos ayudará a mejorar las cosas de las que quizás no seamos conscientes. Al final, Niccolo Maquiavelo consideró que su vida fue un fracaso. Considerando que, a pesar de que apenas conozco a mi padre, me considero un autodidacta alegre que es más feliz al leer las biografías de los filósofos, entrenar béisbol, preparar y vender jugos orgánicos para mi comunidad. Baruch Spinoza fue un afilador de lentes que encontró intelectualmente sentimientos de libertad al escribir para sí mismo en un momento en que sus contemporáneos estaban siendo censurados, perseguidos y asesinados por expresar sus ideas. Spinoza escribió libremente sin ego ni miedo a la censura porque sabía que no podía distribuir sus escritos sin represalias. Hoy en día, la censura funciona inundándonos con inmensas cantidades de información errónea, información irrelevante, videos de personas que caen, hasta que simplemente somos incapaces de enfocarnos. Sabemos de Spinoza porque dejó instrucciones para que sus escritos se hicieran públicos después de su muerte. De los cientos de niños que he entrenado en los últimos 20 años, aquellos que llegaron a las Grandes Ligas (Adam Ottavino, Harrison Bader, Pedro Beato, James Norwood) eligieron tener una creencia proactiva en sí mismos; Mientras entrenaba a estos jóvenes, aprendí que la autoestima es una elección que los individuos solo pueden hacer por sí mismos. En esencia, lo que crees en tu corazón es lo que eres y en lo que te conviertes.

Hoy en día, Estados Unidos tiene un presidente que promueve el miedo al explotar la incapacidad de la mayoría de las personas para abordar las cosas racionalmente cuando la historia y las emociones están involucradas. Los resultados desiguales de los logros humanos evocan nociones simplistas de injusticia que pueden hacer que las personas

malinterpreten las mejores acciones que requieren decisiones difíciles. Cualquier ciudadano con mentalidad cívica que valga la pena, tiene que seguir de cerca la política y los asuntos actuales, ya que las decisiones tomadas en la sede del poder no son simples ni transparentes. Estos actos afectan naturalmente el éxito futuro del país y requieren atención continua. Reconozco que mi vida está en proceso y lo que funciona para mí puede no funcionar para otra persona. Independientemente de la persona, debemos ser responsables, transparentes y rendirnos a nuestras realidades individuales. Todos tenemos que lidiar con nuestra capacidad de hacer el bien y el mal. Muchos de nosotros nos preparamos para la derrota porque no estamos dispuestos a reconocer el lado destructivo de nuestro ser. Optando en cambio por crear narrativas contraproducentes en nuestras cabezas en lugar de perseguir la difícil tarea de rendirnos y vernos objetivamente. Independientemente de si creciste con un padre o no, eres el autor de las historias que te cuentas a ti mismo. Elijo verme como el epítome del sueño americano a pesar de las realidades de mi vida familiar. ¿O debería crear una narrativa para racionalizar y justificar elecciones y comportamientos que son contraproducentes?

A menudo me encuentro en situaciones de querer ayudar a difundir un mensaje de amor universal, esperanza realista y conciencia. Elijo escribir a pesar de no saber qué necesitarían todos los niños sin papá. Me gustaría ayudarlos a todos y, sin embargo, no tengo una idea real de lo que plausiblemente puedo ofrecer; Espero que la mayoría no se haya cansado y que sus mentes no sean impenetrables y opacas. Creo que todos poseemos un super poder, una capacidad para dar a las personas algo que podemos estar seguros de que necesitan fundamentalmente, basado en una visión primordial y básica de la naturaleza humana: que todos nosotros tenemos una profunda necesidad de tranquilidad. Dicho esto, encuentro comentarios contra la mayoría de los padres ausentes acosados por una sensación de inseguridad y, bajo un camuflaje excelente, en mayor o menor medida, de tristeza. Si esto te suena, no estás solo. A pesar de no haber crecido con mi padre y la mayoría de las veces decirme que nuestra relación era irreparable, seguí mi propio consejo y llamé a mi padre en el Día del Padre 2014. Podía escuchar la alegría en su frágil voz. Ambos habíamos perdido más de 75 libras desde nuestra última reunión (yo a través de un estilo de vida vegano y él como un efecto secundario del cáncer de próstata). Durante las próximas semanas hablé con mi papá regularmente. Murió seis semanas después del único Día del Padre que compartimos. Me alegro de haber podido decir adiós.

CHAPTER 17 - BLACK LIVES MATTER

Part of me believes The Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation (raised more than 90 million dollars in 2020) is an opportunistic money grab. Instead of criticizing the foundation, I want to share what has helped me improve my quality of life (Latino from Bronx NY) raised by a single mother. If someone believes the odds are stacked against them, they shouldn't be embarrassed. Instead, embrace your insignificance and be less personal about disagreements once one realizes that one is only saying that one's point of view is more probable than one's opponent's, not that one is cetainly right and he or she certainly wrong. Relativism discourages most people to embrace their insignificance, because the beliefs are not false from the point of view of the believer. In other words, fallibilism gives us pause by reminding us we may be wrong. It emphasizes the risk that we are acting on false beliefs. When individuals discourage respect for rational standards, the confusion created is a smokescreen others also use to hide behind in order to avoid proper scrutiny, even though I'm sure they don't intend it that way.

Despite the best of intentions, any financial advice given to a person has limitations regarding perception and enlightenment. How much you reveal to the person from whom advice is sought and the advisor's capacity to conceptualize, describe, empathize and

communicate the best economic course of actions determine the usefulness of the advice. Services like Google and Youtube are used for easy access to endless advice. The pitfalls of this approach is qualifying the soundness and credentials of the advisors. Unlike most, I accepted my fiscal reality prior to attending Binghamton University. My proactive approach enabled me to pay off my student loans one month before graduation and have the credit to purchase my first property. Despite earning a 3.5 GPA in summer school at Iona College (before I attended Binghamton University), I dropped out after my first semester due to lack of motivation and/or a long-term vision. I did not want to misspend my Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) award. In January 1986, my financial aid advisor informed me I would receive a $5,800 refund check from the school since I wasn't attending in the spring semester. Within one month, I spent all the money, the majority went towards a car. In 1992, I transferred to Binghamton University's School of Management from Monroe College in the Bronx. At the time, I was receiving social services and food stamps to support myself.

I also started two businesses with the use of financial aid money (I'd applied for the maximum amount of student loans while also living as frugally as possible). Years back when I'd used my student loan money to buy a $5,000 car, I had been able to sell it for the same amount 18 months later. It was through this transaction that I'd identified an opportunity to start a business. There were a number of independent car dealers I knew well who would sell me cars "as is" at a wholesale cost plus a $200 fee. "As is" means there is no guarantee of the quality of the car. I would attend wholesale auctions, bid and purchase cars I was interested in and bring back the cars with temporary plates issued by the wholesale dealer. I'd purchase moderately priced cars that appealed to students and sell them for an amount no greater than the average financial aid check. I struck deals with customers to add an additional 15 days to the state's lemon law warranty, and extended miles-based warranties from 90 days to 120 days.

I surrendered to the reality of my situation and took steps to create a different path. I incorporated the same process to my food choices and lost 23 pounds.

C.E.N.T.S. stands for Control, Entry, Need, Time and Scalable

Take Control through a healthy living visualization exercise. See yourself in a cave, in which students are kept. These pupils have been in this cave all their lives. They all eat the same food and share the same eating habits. The cave's exit is not impossible to reach but since it entails making changes to ones daily eating routine, most students stay inside the cave. If one managed to exit the cave, at first he or she would be disoriented because being exposed to new things may seem intimidating and scary. But as the fear goes away, the student is no longer a prisoner to poor eating habits and is able to make better food choices.

How easy is it to Enter and make these changes is up to each individual. After learning this, as a former cave dweller, you'll see how bad the choices of your former colleagues in the cave really are.

You may not feel a Need to return to the cave and feel conflicted. If you returned to the cave and rejoined them, you would take no pleasure in their accolades or praise for knowledge of their poor eating habits.

If you're an altruist and want to help the unenlightened students, will you have enough Time to do your job most effectively and truly make a difference? For their own part, the people may see you as deranged, not really knowing what reality is and would say you think you're better than the rest of them. Lastly, is your process Scalable?

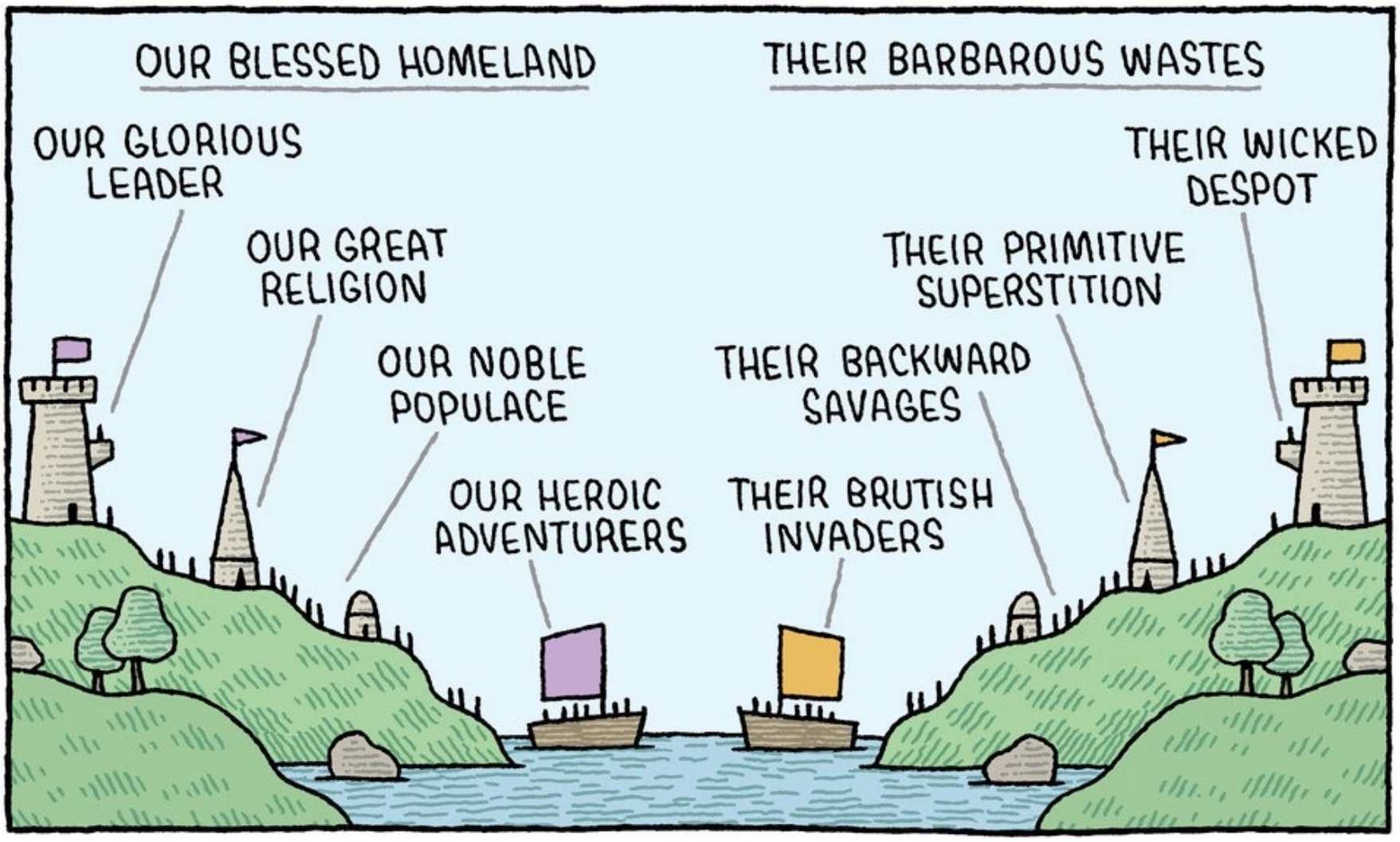
In all human systems and most complex systems, the second layer of effects often dwarfs the first layer, yet often goes unconsidered. In other words, we must consider that effects have effects. Second-order thinking is best illustrated by the recent coverage of micro loans to the poor in under developed countries. The early loan recipients used these loans to start small businesses, many buying and selling phone cards. Initially, the early participant in the phone card business was similar to being the first person to stand up while watching a concert. Unfortunately, once one person does it, everyone will do it in order to see, thus negating the first person standing. Now, however, the whole audience suffers standing rather than sitting comfortably.

The micro loans market became 10 people demanding calling cards with 500 people selling phone cards. How many people with outstanding loan are using their degrees to pay the loans back? How many are in default without completing a degree?

This free information accompanied by my "personal mission statement", is an almost perfect example of a pure public good. It is completely non rival and largely non excludable.

Personal Mission Statement

Despite often being ignored, not listened to or validated, continue to be conscious, grateful, forgiving, envisioning a perfect future, in the moment and blessed. Have unconditional love for all, but manage your time wisely. Spend your time leading by example and modeling desired behavior. Make the most of the present moment since the best you'll ever be you are right now.



CONCLUSION

I believe American exceptionalism is alive and well in 2020. For it to continue, we have to practice and continue to enable philosophy and freedom of thought. The study of philosophy helps us to enhance our ability to solve problems, our communication skills, our persuasive powers, and our writing skills. Freedom of thought is the freedom of an individual to hold or consider a fact, viewpoint, or thought, independent of others' viewpoints. Most Americans who are unwilling to ask themselves tough questions, may think America finds itself in a dangerous position in 2019. These well itended citizens fear that America has lost its greatness. They fear they've lost their self respect and their perception is validated through nostalgic propaganda ("Make America Great Again"). The reality of the United States predicament is that things aren't as bad as many politicians would like us to believe. This often used political game plan is designed to keep us distracted from asking ourselves tough questions since we seldom reflect on the distinction between an intellectual democracy and a democracy by birthright.

In Chapter 1 (Self Motivated) I stated my confidence comes from managing my internal uncertainties. My first step is to have a clear and defined vision of my goal with a focus on things I can control. Since I don't rely on externals, I seek to create new habits and continue

to replace bad habits with new ones inline with my vision. The Power of Habit by Charles Duhigg explains a simple three-step process that all habits follow. This cycle, known as The Habit Loop, says that each habit consists of...

The Trigger: the event that starts the habit.
The Routine: the behavior that you perform, the habit itself.
The Reward: the benefit that is associated with the behavior.
Each phase of the loop is important for building new habits, but the first factor: habit triggers is were self-motivation blossoms. There are five primary ways that a new habit can be triggered. If you understand each of them, then you can select the right one for the particular habit that you are working on. The 5 triggers are:

Trigger 1: Time
Trigger 2: Location
Trigger 3: Preceding Event
Trigger 4: Emotional State
Trigger 5: Other People
No matter what trigger you choose for your new habit, there is one important thing to understand. The key to choosing a successful trigger is to pick a trigger that is very specific and immediately actionable. Play around with these five habit triggers and see what help you realize your goal.

In chapter 4 (The Dilemma) I wrote that Donald Trump has at times, triggered my emotional state and made it impossible for me to be silent. Unfortunately, we have an insecure President who projects in order to avoid facing his dark side and poses a danger to society. Projection occurs when we attribute an element of our personality, which resides in our unconscious to another person or a group. By itself, projection is one of the commonest psychic phenomenas. Everything that is unconscious in ourselves we discover in our neighbor and we treat him accordingly. Instead of tying all our personal problems to Donald Trump's shortcomings, we should know the 10 most common defense mechanisms that people often use. Once we're aware of these defense mechanisms we can do a better job of recognizing and removing the self imposed obstacles that often cloud our emotional state.

1. Projection

Some thoughts or feelings you have about another person may make you uncomfortable. If you project those feelings, you're misattributing them to the other person.

2. Repression

Unsavory thoughts, painful memories, or irrational beliefs can upset you. Instead of facing them, you may unconsciously choose to hide them in hopes of forgetting about them entirely. That does not mean, however, that the memories disappear entirely. They may influence behaviors, and they may impact future relationships. You just may not realize the impact this defense mechanism is having.

3. Denial

Denial is one of the most common defense mechanisms. It occurs when you refuse to accept reality or facts. You block external events or circumstances from your mind so that you don't have to deal with the emotional impact. In other words, you avoid the painful feelings or events. This defense mechanism is one of the most widely known, too. The phrase, "They're in denial" is commonly understood to mean a person is avoiding reality despite what may be obvious to people around them.

4. Displacement

You direct strong emotions and frustrations toward a person or object that doesn't feel threatening. This allows you to satisfy an impulse to react, but you don't risk significant consequences. A good example of this defense mechanism is getting angry at your child or spouse because you had a bad day at work. Neither of these people is the target of your strong emotions, but reacting to them is likely less problematic than reacting to your boss.

5. Regression

Some people who feel threatened or anxious may unconsciously "escape" to an earlier stage of development. This type of defense mechanism may be most obvious in young children. If they experience trauma or loss, they may suddenly act as if they're younger again. They may even begin wetting the bed or sucking their thumb. Adults can regress, too. Adults who are struggling to cope with events or behaviors may return to sleeping with a cherished stuffed animal, overeat foods they find comforting, or begin chain smoking or chewing on pencils or pens. They may also avoid everyday activities because they feel overwhelmed.

6. Rationalization

Some people may attempt to explain undesirable behaviors with their own set of "facts." This allows you to feel comfortable with the choice you made, even if you know on another

level it's not right. For example, people who might be angry at co-workers for not completing work on time could be ignoring the fact that they're typically late, too.

7. Sublimation

This type of defense mechanism is considered a positive strategy. That's because people who rely on it choose to redirect strong emotions or feelings into an object or activity that is appropriate and safe. For example, instead of lashing out at your employees, you choose to channel your frustration into kickboxing or exercise. You could also funnel or redirect the feelings into music, art, or sports.

8. Reaction formation

People who use this defense mechanism recognize how they feel, but they choose to behave in the opposite manner of their instincts. A person who reacts this way, for example, may feel they should not express negative emotions, such as anger or frustration. They choose to instead react in an overly positive way.

9. Compartmentalization

Separating your life into independent sectors may feel like a way to protect many elements of it. For example, when you choose to not discuss personal life issues at work, you block off, or compartmentalize, that element of your life. This allows you to carry on without facing the anxieties or challenges while you're in that setting or mindset.

10. Intellectualization

When you're hit with a trying situation, you may choose to remove all emotion from your responses and instead focus on quantitative facts. You may see this strategy in use when a person who is let go from a job choose to spend their days creating spreadsheets of job opportunities and leads.

In Chapter 9 (Are You Woke Yet) I argued once awakened, the worst case scenario may prompt one to think "life sucks". If this sounds like you, recognizing other people lead productive lives while your life continues to be underwhelming, is a step in the right direction. According to Professor David Logan, author of "Tribal Leadership", 48% of the groups we belong to, at first, seem to be functional, with most individuals having a high regard for their place in the organization. However, many of them complain that they're doing all the work. They form "dyads" – one-on-one relationships between two people – and have little communication beyond that. We find this behavior in most places where smart,

successful people show up. Failure to confront our imperfections forces us to continually look for scapegoats to make up for when the story we're telling ourselves doesn't add up. Enabling readers to experience an epiphany about communication that unites Americans around a core set of values is my goal. These values encourage dyads to become "triads" – groups of three people together with shared projects and common values. "Triads are the building blocks of Information that flows freely through networks and innovation enabling individuals to surrender. Surrender is the simple but profound wisdom of yielding to rather than opposing the flow of life. There is room to go higher still. We should be able to be innovative to create new opportunities, allowing us to embark on history-making projects. This is how we end up changing the world for the better.

Despite often being guilty of projection, intellectualization and sublimation, I believe America's future is brighter than it has ever been despite giving the vote to all citizens without connecting it to that of wisdom. Collectively, we have to decide the direction we wish to follow instead of folding to externalities. Our responsibility to other countries absent mutual benefit, have been mostly transferred to encourage these nations to practice self reliance. At this great juncture in our history, Americans should be self reflecting in order for each of us to make our own way in the world. We should rejoice as we visualize the rebirth of the American people. Unfortunately, not everyone will ever see things the same way, and here is where the danger lies. Some Americans resent a world where the input of other countries are addressed. Instead of taking global concerns seriously, many US citizens continue to tell themselves a counterproductive story. In America, the left and the likes of Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez are just as guilty as the conservatives of talking at each other instead of to each other. This narrow minded approach discourages constructive conversations that enable citizens to self reflect.

Cortez's base fear of being taken advantage of and the Right's fear of under producing for lack of opportunities are at times, counterproductive since the tragedy of the commons predicts only three possible outcomes. One is for actors with coercive power to enforce an allocation policy on behalf of the people (socialist solution). Another is for the commons to break up as village members, fence-off bits they can defend and manage sustainably. (Trump's physical and metaphysical wall) Lastly, the sea of mud many think we have today. Both Ms. Cortez and Mr. Trump's ideas are half truths (smoke-and-mirrors) of often repeated Republican and Democratic economic policy talking points.

Ask yourself, how can we avoid strategies of divide and conquer, ignore distracting messages and instead create a way for us to work with citizens and government in a format that eliminates these ingrained fears by understanding both supply and demand? Science and

many of the human sciences are beautifully based on evidence-based, fact-yielding work. The problem is that in many of the most important aspects of existence, there simply are no 'facts' available. The big questions that bedevil us, individually and collectively, have no facts to appeal to. – How should we live? – What is the right economic system to institute? – What sort of relationships should we have? – What choices should we make? – Who are we and what do we want and need? In the face of such dilemmas, we may well long for facts – by which we really mean, answers we can be assured will be indisputably correct. But we invariably face ambiguity and, whatever answers we formulate, a degree of loss, and the risk of blindness and error. It is these elements which those of us who avoid addressing these questions rationally, deep down, especially intolerant towards and upset about. Their hatred of bias reflects a longing for a world without a need for hard choices and the sacrifice these necessarily entail. We may well long to 'stick to facts,' but we eventually have to try to lead our lives according to values, which are inherently much more contentious and complicated structures. The most unfortunate thing regarding nihilism is not the loss of the ability to believe, but the inability to see the beauty, opportunities and possibilities of things and events occurring around us daily. As a result, the surest way we corrupt a people and encourage splitting, discourage unity through community building and self reliance is to instruct citizens to only hold in higher esteem those who think alike than those who think differently. An elite is needed not to govern, but to enable people to govern themselves since no problem can withstand the assault of sustained thinking.

Fredrick Hegel wrote some very long and very famous books, among them the Phenomenology Of The Human Spirit, The Science Of Logic and Elements Of The Philosophy Of Right. Unfortunately, Hegel's work like Donald Trump's rhetoric is confusing and complicated instead of clear and direct. Hegel fell in love with and overly used incomprehensible pros. This has made philosophy much weaker to readers than it should be and much harder to identify the top three lessons we can learn from Fredrick Hegel. Firstly, important parts of ourselves could be found in history. During Hegel's time, a standard European way at looking at the past was to consider it as primitive and to feel proud how much progress has been made to get to the modern age. Hegel argued every era could be looked at as a depository of certain kinds of wisdom. This means we need to go back in time to rescue things which have gone missing. For example, we might need to mine the history of ancient Greece to fully grasp the idea what community can be - today, we can learn from the successful application of Epicurean philosophy which enable and promote happiness in democratic societies despite communism being a corrupt unsuccessful attempt at Epicureanism. The middle ages can teach us about the role of honor, despite this period appalling attitudes towards children or the rights of women. We have to rescue from the past ideas to compensate for the blind spots of the present since progress is never linear.

Secondly, learn from ideas you dislike. We should listen carefully to our intellectual enemies since bits of the truth are always getting scattered to unappealing and peculiar places and we must put in the work to make sense of them. For example, nationalism has had many terrible manifestations. Why do you think that is? Could it be the need for people to feel proud from where they come from and anchor their identity beyond the ego? Thirdly, Progress is messy. We make progress by going from one extreme to another as we seek to compensate for previous mistakes. Hegel believed it takes three moves before the right balance of the issue could be found, a process Hegel named “The Dialectic”. If this is true today, opportunities will abound.

When talking about money, despite the best of intentions, any financial advice given to a person has limitations regarding perception and enlightenment. How much you reveal to the person from whom advice is sought and the advisor’s capacity to conceptualize, describe and communicate the best economic course of actions determine the usefulness of the advice. Services like Google and Youtube are used for easy access to endless advice. The pitfalls of this approach is qualifying the soundness and credentials of the advisors. I prefer a visualization exercise where I see myself in a cave full of prisoners who’ve been in this cave all their lives. All the inmates have the same jobs and share the same shopping habits. The cave’s exit is not impossible to reach but since it entails making changes to ones daily thinking routine, most prisoners stay inside the cave. If a prisoner managed to exit the cave, at first he or she would be disoriented because being exposed to new skills that are in higher demand may seem intimidating and scary. But as the fear goes away, the person is no longer a prisoner to outdated skills and is able to have access to more economic opportunities. The choice to put in the work to make these changes is up to you. After learning this, as a former cave dweller, you’ll see how many of your former colleagues skills gradually become outdated. You may not feel a Need to return to the cave and feel conflicted. If you returned to the cave and rejoined them, you would take no pleasure in their accolades or praise for knowledge of present opportunities. If you’re an altruist and want to help the unenlightened, will you have enough Time to truly make a difference? For their own part, the people may see you as deranged, not really knowing what the economic ramifications will be and may say you think you’re better than the rest of them. Lastly, is your process Scalable? A system, business or software that is described as scalable has an advantage because it is more adaptable to the changing needs or demands of its users or clients.

Regardless of communal validation, we should also seek to make open-source cooperation sustainable through servant leader beliefs similar to what programmers do with software. Part of the answer certainly lies in the fact that using software does not decrease its value.

Instead, widespread use of open-source software tends to increase its value, as users fold in their own fixes and features (code patches). In this inverse commons, the grass grows taller when it's grazed upon. That this public good cannot be degraded by overuse takes care of half of the congested–public-goods problem. It doesn't explain why open source doesn't suffer from under provision. Why don't people who know the open-source community exists universally exhibit free-rider behavior waiting for others to do the work they need, or (if they do the work themselves) not bothering to contribute the work back into the commons? Part of the answer lies in the fact that people don't merely need solutions, they need solutions on time. It's seldom possible to predict when someone else will finish a given piece of needed work. If the payoff from fixing a bug or adding a feature is sufficient to any potential contributor, that person will dive in and do it (at which point the fact that everyone else is a free rider becomes irrelevant). Another part of the answer lies in the fact that the putative market value of small patches to a common source base is hard to capture. Being reactive by only sitting on the patch gains nothing. Instead, it incurs a future cost—the effort involved in remerging the patch into the source base in each new release. So the payoff from not being a participant is actually negative.

Many of us turn to reality tv looking for substantive programming in avoidance of naiveness. This is true in appearance, but not in fact, for the future may still be hideous since individuals have a tendency of being able to remedy their problems only by aggravating them, so that each day is much more tolerable before the solution is found to the difficulties of the moment. For you to clearly envision a reality show I proposed to The Learning Channel (TLC), I highly recommend two books “The Righteous Mind - Why Good People Are Divided By Politics And Religion” by Jonathan Haidt and “Sapiens - A Brief History Of Humankind” by Yuval Noah Harari : Haidt is daylight and Harari, darkness. These two men have neither the same method nor the same morality. The Righteous Mind encourages you to watch yourself; Sapiens encourages you to speak out regardless who you make uncomfortable. These salutary or awkward consequences matters little to those who question themselves and are comfortable with bringing light to uncomfortable truths. Hence, some of us meditate upon the bad luck of being born without concern for the harm we can cause others or ourselves. Are Americans grown up and ready to process the intoxication of harmful truths?

Jonathan Haidt doesn’t think so. Haidt is an American social psychologist, Professor of Ethical Leadership at New York University's Stern School of Business. In his book “The Righteous Mind” he describes his transformation from liberal to an intellectual. Haidt takes the high road with regards to religion and correctly points out the effective utility the role of religion has played throughout history. Haidt repeatedly uses The Elephant and the Rider

Metaphor. Haidt says that our emotional side is the Elephant and our rational side is the rider. Perched atop the Elephant, the Rider holds the reins and seems to be the leader. But the Rider's control is precarious because the Rider is so small relative to the Elephant since it is not reason who guides life, but customs.

Yuval Noah Harari is less optimistic. Harari received his PhD from the University of Oxford in 2002, and is currently a lecturer at the Department of History, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His books have sold 20 Million copies worldwide. Harari believes objective things exist independent of human consciousness, like radioactivity. Subjective things exist solely in one's imagination, like a child's imaginary friend, religion, money and corporations. “The inter-subjective is something that exists within the communication network linking the subjective consciousness of many individuals. If a single individual changes his or her beliefs, or even dies, it is of little importance. However, if most individuals in the network die or change their beliefs, the inter-subjective phenomenon will mutate or disappear.

Jonathan Haidt’s Astroid Club is a naive altruistic attempt to make a difference similar to this free e-book. The Astroid Club is a unique non-debate on America's biggest problems, which are hurtling toward us through space and time at an alarming rate of speed. Envision a gathering convened by two people who disagree politically but are willing to mutually acknowledge that the other side may see some real threats more clearly than does one's own side. An approach that would make Fredrick Hegel blush with joy! Unfortunately, the last post on the Astroid Club’s website is from 2014. Despite this, I believe creating a show with a non-debate format is what America needs. The goal of the show will be to bring attention to the things we don’t think we’re bad at and help individuals work through the unconscious resistance. Our show can be impactful and collectively, we can decide the direction we wish to follow instead of folding to externalities.

Lastly, in my search to lead a wiser and less sorrowful life, I’ve embraced my insignificance and celebrate my stupidity since the more I read, the less I know. This is a useful list of western philosophers I regularly think about during my daily walks.

Seneca - “What need is there to weep over parts of life when the whole of it calls for tears”. We get weepy and furious not simply because our plans have failed, our plans failed and we expected them not too. The task of philosophy is to disappoint us gently before life has a chance to do so, violently. There is strength in a consoling pessimism.

Saint Augustine - original sin - Human nature is originally damaged because of original sin. Human nature is inherently damaged and tainted because in the garden of eden, the mother of all people, Eve, sinned against God by eating an apple from the tree of knowledge. Her

guilt was then passed down to every single one of us, and now all of our endeavors are bound to fail because they are the work of a corrupt and faulty spirit. As a metaphor, this statement has a beguiling poetic truth, relevant to both atheists and believers. Augustine's writings implies, we shouldn't expect too much from people.

Michel De Montaigne - "Kings and philosophers shit, and so do ladies". We shouldn't be intimidated by people who's overt form of life may seem better than our own. We read De Montaigne to help free ourselves from under confidence and shyness. If you find yourself tying your happiness to material wealth, remind yourself that you don't have to be rich to throw a good party.

Blaise Pascal - All our unhappiness comes from our inability to happily sit alone in our room. This is not literally true, but the exaggeration of this idea helps to bring home a general insight, we are tempted to leave our rooms and crave excitement that often turn out badly, we meddle in the life of others but fail to help them, we seek fame and end up being misunderstood by a large number of people we don't know. We avoid thinking before we act. We have to become better, quieter friends to ourselves.

Baruch Spinoza - We should look at life under the aspect of eternity, as thou we were gazing down at the earth from far away, from a distant star. From this perspective, the incidents that trouble us don't seem so shocking and so large. What is a divorce, getting fired, the death of a loved one, a rejection in love, experiencing discrimination, when compared to the earth's 4.5 billion year history? We always use passion to exaggerate our here and now, but our reasoned intelligence gives us access to a unique intelligent perspective in which we participate in, what Spinoza called external totality that we can use instead of railing against the status quo, we can opt for clear eyed serenity instead.

Immanuel Kant - Out of the crooked timber of humanity, no straight thing was ever made. The acceptance of this reality head on - don't expect perfection in government with regards to politics. Don't presume rationality will triumph. The wise does everything to assume that error and folly will try to have their way and create structures to contain them. The wise never expects that one person can be everything to them.

Presently, during my daily walks with the help of philosophy and the word games I play in my head, I've imagined a world where we accept the idea "becoming" has no goal and that underneath all "becoming" there is no grand unity in which the individual could immerse himself completely as in an element of supreme value, we can choose another path: instead of judging ourselves and others for things we did or didn't do in the past, we all can instead invent a world beyond it, a true world. We can easily begin to remove self imposed obstacles

once we recognize life is what you do with what's been done to you. What individuals can become through proactive living and the habits we each choose to have are and become our true reality. Most important since the best way to affect any group is by individuals modeling desired behavior. We are bewitched by the practices of saying what describes our ways of going on in the world. If my vision appeals to you, Carl Jung's writings may be what you're looking for.

We Start Out Relatively Unconscious (Mostly Asleep) We all start out as part of a collective. As we grow, our family, friends, school, religion, and culture shape our personality. The Taoists call this personality the acquired mind as we acquire it through our environment. In the external world, this environment is conventional (as in conventional rules or conventional society). The conventional code holds specific guidelines of what we should believe, what things mean, and how we should behave. This conventional, outer world has structure and order. But within us is an entirely different world. And this inner world, for most of us, is as chaotic as ocean waves during a storm. We call this inner world the unconscious, of which we could say, is everything within us that falls outside of our conscious awareness—everything we don't know or can't observe within ourselves. While we want to believe we're conscious of most of our thoughts, feelings, actions, and behavior, all evidence suggests otherwise. We are, in truth, mostly unconscious beings. In the beginning, we are mostly asleep. Society conditions our consciousness. And so we remain unconscious to our true self for at least the first half of life.

The Individuation Process

Jung believed each person is unique and has a distinct destiny. The individuation process was Jung's way of explaining the path to optimal personal development for an individual. Individuation is the process, simple or complex as the case may be, by which every living organism becomes what it was destined to become from the beginning. The purpose of this individuation process is to increase the individual's consciousness. With greater consciousness, individuals can heal the splits in their mind between what's conscious and unconscious, bringing them to wholeness in their psyche. In the first half of life, we make our way through the world, doing our best to develop healthy egos. The first portion of life is mainly external as we seek to meet our basic needs. From Jung's outlook, the second part of life can represent a turning inward toward a deeper part of ourselves. This inward turn starts the individuation process.

The Inner Battle Many Of Us Fear And Avoid Facing

Prior to beginning the individuation process, we have certainty. Through the course of our development, we form a solid self-identity. We think we know who we are. But this self-identity is always one-sided. It's an illusion, or maya, as the Budhists call it. Because we are unconscious, we don't feel the inherent tensions and oppositions between the conscious self we know and the unconscious parts of ourselves. Consider how the values and world views of masculine and feminine principles can vary. The masculine seeks autonomy. The feminine seeks communion or relationship. Can you imagine what it would be like to integrate both masculine and feminine principles within your mind, not favoring either perspective over the other? It's not easy, but this is part of the goal of the individuation process. Jung found that opposites create tension in the psyche. If we don't learn to address these tensions, denying the opposites instead, we repress or push the pressure out of our consciousness. But repressing doesn't eliminate the opposites or the tension itself. It only makes them more destructive in our psyche by strengthening our shadows. Repressing tension makes us onesided, and it leads us to project our unconscious fantasies on to reality. When we deny these internal tensions, we enforce our delusions and self-deception.

Instincts and Psyche

A key pair of opposites in Jung's work are instincts and psyche. The instincts are our biological roots, our body. The psyche, in Jung's conception, is the totality of mental processes that include both conscious and unconscious forces. Any time we try to favor psyche over instincts—mind over body, spirit over nature—or vice versa, we cut ourselves off (dissociate) from a part of what we are.

Good and Evil

Most of us prefer pursuing "good" while avoiding "evil." We want to realize God and cast out the Devil. We want angels, not demons. Jung believed that evil had a different meaning before Christianity. The rise of Christianity added a kind of spirit of evil to the principle of evil which it did not have before. The sharpening of differentiation of ethical reactions into too clear-cut black-and-white lines is not favorable to life.

As the Greek philosopher Heraclitus said, "Good and evil are one."

Three Stages of the Individuation Process

While the individuation process is different for each person, Jung highlights three archetypes that coincide with three stages of psychological development.

Stage 1: The Shadow

The shadow archetype represents all the personal traits we have ignored, denied, or cut off from ourselves. Individuals first get to know and integrate their shadow—all the disown parts of themselves they alienated to create their personality.

Stage 2: The Anima/Animus

The anima is the feminine component of a man's personality. The animus is the masculine counterpart in a woman. Jung saw the anima/animus as enlivening souls or spirits within men and women. This archetype connects us to the impersonal collective unconscious. To Jung, they are essential building blocks in the psychic structure of every man and woman.

Stage 3: The Self

The Self is the archetype of wholeness and self-transcendence. A Wise Old Man or Woman often represents this universal image. Jung borrowed the concept of the Self from Hindu philosophy. He described the Self as the "totality of the whole psyche," distinguishing it from the ego. The ego represents a small part of this whole psyche. Think of the Self as an unknown, inner Divine center we explore throughout our lives.

If we want to change how things are, then we need to change the way we use words. But can language-games set us free? language usage admits a process of argument and change, in virtue of what it is. Look at the picture above, and you can see it as a duck. Look again, and you can see it as a rabbit. Because language-games are played by humans, we can notice what is going on when we see things as this, or as that. Take the controversy over all-male speaker events. You can look at the line-up and say 'a panel of experts', or you can say it's a 'manel of experts'. But is it only a manel if you choose to see it that way? The same labeling game can be done with things we hold near and dear like religion and politics. These examples invite us to question what we take to be given in everyday uses of language. how we use language admits contestation and change, in virtue of what it is.

My remarks might suggest that we need to play language-games differently if we are to change anything. Maybe it's wrong of me to share my rebellious views since I live in a state of dissatisfaction with language. At times I feel alienated, cut off from others and myself

within language. While the contented are untroubled, and most people are inclined to think that way. Using language is an integral part of the human condition. We live within language, yet our way of life is something we find hard to see. My biggest strength is being ok when I'm not feeling ok. (I'll explain) I enjoy being in a good mood, but I understand that I have to honor my feelings when I'm not. Before, I was constantly trying to hold it all together by hiding behind various masks. I ran away from private moments of discomfort (self reflection) out of fear of what would happen. This is why traumas are so debilitating when you consider that most of life will unfold in accordance with forces far outside your control, regardless of what your mind says about it.

This may lead to a problem that follows us throughout out life, as adults we long for others to understand us in the deepest ways, but Lacan is preparing us to face the darker possibilities that in fact other people will be resolutely stuck on the outside of us. Assuming us to be pretty much what we seem, but heavily judging us or caricaturing us without meaning to. The different perspective from these books continue to help me cope daily.

I wrote this book as a therapeutic exercise, not as a way to peddle ready made answers to this predicament nor have I sweetened the deal by throwing in a list of philosophers. Indeed, as long as there is language it will confuse us, we will face the temptation to misunderstand. And there is no vantage point outside it. There is no escape from language-games then, but we can forge a kind of freedom from within them. We might first need to ‘be stupid’ or embrace our insignificance if we are to see this.

By we, I’m referring to all Americans regardless of race. As the demographic composition of our American melting Pot (Salad Bowl) churns out it’s next iteration, Latinos and people of color will also be self reflecting in order for each of us to make our own way in the world. We should rejoice as we visualize the rebirth of the American people. Unfortunately, not all Americans will ever see things the same way, these well intended souls for reasons they can only answer, discourage this harmonious view and here is where the danger lies.

As a person of color, I respectfully disagree with comments in a recent NY Times article, "Michael Bloomberg Actively Prepares to Enter 2020 Presidential Race.” @Bill's (African American) argument is noble, yet naively altruistic. I too would like to see all people be racially empathetic. Unfortunately, we are far away from adopting a process that creates an inner peace for all. Noble sentiments at times create the biggest pitfalls and challenges to a more peaceful existence. If things are to continually improve, we must take a multi-disciplinary approach to how we think. Sharing abstract beliefs is only possible if we believe in the rule of law promoting individual liberty. The greatest danger is having good laws

administered badly. Our goal shouldn't be perfection, we should strive to do the greatest good through the most pardonable inconveniences.

We have to do a better job of acknowledging and/or recognizing we have to proceed knowing to increase opportunities for all is likely to favor those better able to take advantage of them and may often first increase inequalities. That means taking risk, being proactive and constructively critical of our own ideology through an “iron man argument”, something many Democrats in particular have a hard time understanding. Before individuals advocate for progressive ideas and describe how these policies work, one should also have skin in the game. The opposition wants to know how are Democrats negatively impacted on occasions Democrat’s policy projections turn out to be incorrect and/or counterproductive?

Unfortunately, vote for Joe in 2020 because the other guy is crazy, isn’t comforting either. What if Democrats are mostly wrong about the current American President? What if Donald Trump’s selfish tendencies are a reflection of what the majority of Americans in the year 2020 are actually like? In the debate between selfish and selfless love, is selfish love the safer bet? Is romanticism (love) overrated? Should we love people the way they want to be loved? Or should we imitate President Donald Trump and love people the way he wants to be loved?

“The difference between the who and the what at the heart of love, separates the heart. It is often said that love is the movement of the heart. Does my heart move because I love someone who is an absolute singularity, or because I love the way that someone is? Often love starts with some type of seduction. One is attracted because the other is like this or like that. Inversely, love is disappointed and dies when one comes to realize the other person doesn’t merit our love. The other person isn’t like this or that. So at the death of love, it appears that one stops loving another not because of who they are but because they are such and such. That is to say, the history of love, the heart of love, is divided between the who and what. The question of being, to return to philosophy, because the first question of philosophy is: What is it to be? What is “being”? The question of being is itself always already divided between who and what. Is “Being” someone or something? I speak of it abstractly, but I think that whoever starts to love, is in love or stops loving, is caught between this division of the who and the what. One wants to be true to someone—singularly, irreplaceably —and one perceives that this someone isn’t x or y. They didn’t have the properties, the images, that I thought I’d loved. So fidelity is threatened by the difference between the who and the what.”

— Jacques Derrida

Why do you think political parties emerged in the United States? Who were these political parties? And what did they believe? A political party is a group of people with similar political goals and opinions. This happens when two or more groups of people have opposing views, and both want to gain power.

George Washington made sure to fill his cabinet with people who had different opinions in order to make more informed decisions as president. Washington warned that political parties agitate the community with ill founded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity of one part against another; torments occasional riots and insurrections. If opens the door for foreign influence and corruption which, finds a facilitated access to the government itself through channels of party passion.

Alexander Hamilton is considered the founder of the Federalist party. The federalists favored a strong federal government and a loose construction of the constitution. In other words, the constitution should be interpreted broadly. Hamilton used this argument when he defended the creation of the Bank of the United States. The federalist supported the growth of business and advocated for protective tariffs, infant industries in particular. They also supported alliances with Great Britain and their policies tended to support the wealthy. Federalist found most of their support in the northern states.

Thomas Jefferson is considered the founder of the Democratic Republican party. Jefferson's party favored strong state government and the powers of the federal government should be limited to what was explicitly stated in the constitution or a strict construction of the constitution. Democratic Republicans believed governing should happen at a much local level since they can deal with the states concerns more effectively. Because of this, they supported state banks instead of national banks. Supported free trade with Europe and wanted an alliance with France after their support in the American Revolution. They supported agriculture and the small farmer and most of their support came from the southern states. Overtime, these political parties would evolve, disappear and new parties would emerge.

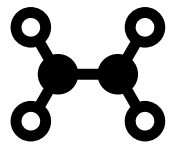
Despite knowing this, this didn't stop me from telling myself a story that made sense of everything I didn't think and/or know I was bad at. In the past, I found myself avoiding people because I repeatedly projected my trauma onto others (that was the head space I was in) I hid from the sun for years and then chose to come out of my self imposed darkness. This is a choice one can only make for themselves.

In time, I found the sun still shining as if I had never left. I'm no longer sorry. I just pick my head up and look at the sun. Today, I try to use relationships to get to know other people, rather than to satisfy what is blocked inside of me.

By not trying to make people fit into my preconceived notions of what I like and dislike, I've learned relationships are not really that difficult. By not being occupied judging and resisting people based upon what is blocked inside of me, I've found people are much easier to get along with—hopefully, so am I.

Letting go of yourself is the simplest way to get closer to others since happiness is a choice we have to continuously work at daily. The only permanent solution to your problems is to go inside and let go of the part of you that seems to have so many problems with reality. Once you do that, you'll be clear enough to deal with what's left.

These are some additional books I turn to for support - The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma - The Untethered Soul by Michael Singer, The Way Of The Superior Man by David Deida. Lastly, checkout Jacque Lacan, I'm a big fan of his work on the mirror effect - we are the only animals that can look into a mirror and recognize ourselves. He was particularly curious about studying when a child sees himself in a mirror for the first time. He was a French psychoanalyst that was treated like a rock star in the sixties. He didn't write very clearly but he made some useful contributions that helps us better understand ourselves. Lacan believed the mirror phase could feel very unsettling because the face in the mirror doesn't necessarily look how we feel. Inside, we are a formless, continuous stream of consciousness made up of speeding thoughts, desires and images. We are ever changing and ambivalent to the core. But, on the outside, we seem like a more or less stable entity with composed and stable features that portray almost nothing of what's going on within. We only have language (words) to try to transcend the gap, & more times than not, words fail to do justice to our real intentions. Not knowing to say what we feel isn't a personal failing, its an existential truth. The image in the mirror is by necessity far more one dimensional than the entity that beholds it.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I wrote this book as a therapeutic exercise, not as a source of unsolicited advice to feel like I have power over other people. In other words, I'm aware of and embrace my insignificance. Despite this, I frequently play devil's advocate while replying to partisan New York Times comments online. Most US commenters care about fairness, but there are two major kinds. On the left, fairness often implies equality, but on the right it means proportionality — people should be rewarded in proportion to what they contribute, even if that guarantees unequal outcomes. The majority of New York Times commenters impulse are generally towards equality or generosity. Yet, in America, equality is as undesirable as it is unrealizable. Attempting to achieve equality requires that each of us forego who we are and what we can do in order to create something in which no one ultimately believes - a society everybody is the same or has the same. Let us by all means seek to increase opportunities for all. We have to proceed knowing to increase opportunities for all is likely to favor those better able to take advantage of them (Trump and other more tolerable wealthy folks) and may often first increase inequalities. I propose this knowing actions based on true beliefs aren't guaranteed to go better than actions based on false ones; but they're much more likely too. For example, in 2018, my 8th grade daughter knew I was lying when she found out I was collecting signatures to run for President Of The United States. Today, I believe many US politicians, the media, many artists and entertainers are frantically trying to come up with a new take on the "American Dream".

Someone commenting, who is in passionate love and want to celebrate this passion, usually post something poetic. If you're commenting when your passion fades and you want to understand your evolving relationship, start posting about psychology. But if you have just ended a relationship and would like to believe you are better off without love, post about philosophy. After reading most daily comments you gradually notice that what at one time we may've considered the most effective expressions gradually become so worn with use that they cease to carry a definite meaning. These underlying ideas may be as valid as ever, but the words, even when they point out problems that are still with us, no longer convey the same conviction; the arguments do not move in a context familiar to all of us; and they rarely go viral giving us direct answers to the questions we repeatedly ask ourselves. The mood of the internet, the media and many of my one time intellectual heroes has long been characterized by disillusionment with capitalism and its paradoxical principles,

disparagement of its achievements, and exclusive concern with the creation of “a better world.”

This is not a mood in which we can hope to encourage hope from common folks on Instagram. If we are to succeed in the great struggle of ideas that is under way, we must first of all know what we believe. We must also become clear in our own minds as to what it is that we want to preserve if we are to prevent ourselves from drifting.

Like Donald Trump and his followers, all other Americans hate being made to feel small. We can’t stand to be reminded of our insignificance, we get affronted and resentful. By embracing our insignificance, the individual can be less personal about disagreements once one realizes that one is only saying that one’s point of view is more probable than one’s opponent’s, not that one is certainly right and he or she certainly wrong. Relativism discourages people to embrace their insignificance, because the beliefs are not false from the point of view of the believer. In other words, fallibilism gives us pause by reminding us we may be wrong. It emphasizes the risk that we are acting on false beliefs. From a scientific point of view, there is far too little rational argument and use of evidence in politics, not too much. When Donald Trump discourages respect for rational standards, the confusion he creates is a smokescreen other politicians have also used to hide behind in order to avoid proper scrutiny, even though I don’t think all their intentions are bad. If I accuse a politician of falsehood and he replies that ‘false’ is a dangerous word, people should laugh. We’d be in trouble if instead their reaction was to nod with respect. For words by themselves are harmless, the danger lies in the choices we make in response to words.

I think one positive thing pragmatic Democrats (if any still exist) can say about Donald Trump’s presidency is that he ended romanticism in America with his inauguration speech - bringing us more inline with Russia’s fatalistic view of the world. Two weeks after Donald Trump's 2016 victory (instead of complaining) I forced myself to self reflect on my own actions and my imagination and candor went into overdrive. Envision a weekly webcast convened by two people who disagree politically but are willing to mutually acknowledge the other side may see some real threats more clearly than does one’s own side. In Mary L. Trump’s book “Too Much and Never Enough: How My Family Created the World's Most Dangerous Man” Fred Trump (Donald’s dad) effectively pointed out to his second youngest son how truly underwhelming human nature is in a capitalist society. The main flaw with capitalism is that it doesn’t solve all the problems of the world. Under capitalism, one person can acquire a higher standard of living than another. This creates resentment and angst. Trump’s genius is in how he hitched his entertainment and political careers to exploiting this angst. Through his reality tv show, Trump enabled both rich and poor folks

an entertaining way to distract themselves from consciousness and self improvement. Fortunately, a positive byproduct of capitalism is that most folk's greed and self interest serves the common good. Like him or not, Trump has effectively marketed himself as the beacon on top of the Capitalist Hill. For every mini Trump among us, there must be at least five thousand poor and the affluence of the few supposes the indigence of the many. The affluence of the rich excites the indignation of the poor, who are often both driven by want, prompted by envy and most often culminates in imitation.

Despite human nature under capitalism mostly being underwhelming, I choose to keep my heart and mind open. I'm hoping most people haven't become jaded and their minds aren't impenetrable or opaque. I believe we all possess a superpower, a capacity to give people something we can be sure they fundamentally require, founded on a primordial and basic insight into human nature: that all of us are in deep need of reassurance. This is why fear is the easy default setting for so many of us - so many of us are afraid of the leap of faith required to practice unconditional love. If this sounds like you, you are not alone. Despite not growing up with my father, I thought of him as the baby he once was and called my dad for Father's Day (2014). I could hear the joy in the frail voice of this most imperfect man. For the first time in my life, I spoke to my dad regularly. He died six weeks after the only Father's Day we shared. I'm glad I was able to say goodbye.

My daughter found out I was collecting signatures to run for US President when two boys in her 8th grade class mocked her by showing her my Facebook pleas for signature on their smart phones. My daughter laughed at the boys and said, " my dad can't be US President, he was born in Puerto Rico. In 2019, after dedicating a book titled "How To Get Better At Things You Don't Think You're Bad At By 2020", to Donald Trump and collecting over 8,000 signatures, my daughter asked me why was I still wasting my time with my severely underfunded one man campaign? I replied, "if someone who can never be US President is able to mobilize his community without any regrets or complaints. No one would be able to stop you if you decided to run for US President in 2048". My daughter rolled her eyes and ignored me the rest of the day. My lust for fame is the last thing I have to conquer if unlike AOC, I'm to avoid imitating Trump's underwhelming tactics. In the summer of 2017, believing my intentions were 100% altruistic, my ego wanted me to exceed the media presence of the 45th US President - I wanted to be as famous as Rush Limbaugh. I now realize one of the best teachers in all of life turns out to be death. No person or situation could ever teach you as much as death has to teach you. While someone could tell you that you are not your body, death shows you. While someone could remind you of the insignificance of the things that you cling too, death takes them all away in a second. While people can teach you that men and women of all races are equal and that there is no

difference between the rich and the poor, death instantly makes us all the same. Something we should all think about when we become distracted by Donald Trump's antics.

Keeping an open heart and mind in an imperfect America

Two weeks after the initial shock of Donald Trump's 2016 victory, rather than complain about the election's outcome, I forced myself to self reflect, or take action that I've woven into this free e-book. I want to enable a debate made up of a combination of both my curiosity and skepticism in order to evaluate all that was happening in America based on my empirical support, practical relevance, psychological insights, cultural context, and ethical considerations instead of solely relying on the media, Facebook and Twitter.

I began by going for long daily walks where I imagined myself hosting a webcast convened by the likes of Donald Trump and Nancy Pelosi, who disagreed politically but somehow in my presence were willing to mutually acknowledge the other side may see some real threats more clearly than does one's own side. Believe it or not, I did this sober, (before marijuana becomes legal in Brooklyn, NY). As for politics, I believe all political parties are made up of flawed people. The acceptance of this reality head on - I don't expect perfection in government with regards to politics. I don't presume rationality will triumph. The wise does everything to assume that error and folly will try to have their way and create structures to contain them. The wise never expects that one person can be everything to them.

Yet, while conceptualizing my broadcasts, I learned that engaging in debates with imaginary individuals (who lack empathy and have a narrow perspective) can be challenging, especially if you want to enable open-hearted and open-minded exchanges. Whereas nostalgia (Make America Great Again) is a complex emotional experience that can often make one overlook or downplay certain aspects of the past, including one's own ignorance. Here are some strategies to help you navigate these situations:

A: Keep your emotions in check and maintain a calm demeanor, even when faced with provocative or insensitive comments. This can help prevent escalating the situation. Nostalgia tends to be selective, focusing on positive or pleasant memories while downplaying or even ignoring negative aspects. This selective memory can create a bias where one may remember the good parts of the past more vividly than the moments of ignorance or mistakes.

B: Practice active listening by genuinely trying to understand their point of view, even if you strongly disagree. This can encourage the other person to reciprocate and engage in a more constructive dialogue. Nostalgia is often associated with strong emotional feelings, and

these emotions can overshadow or minimize the recognition of one's past ignorance. The positive emotions tied to nostalgic memories can make it harder to see or accept one's past limitations.

C: Try to understand where the other person is coming from, their background, experiences, and the factors that have shaped their beliefs. Empathy can foster a more understanding and compassionate exchange. Nostalgia can lead to idealizing the past, viewing it through rose-colored glasses. This idealization can cause individuals to believe that they were more knowledgeable or capable in the past than they actually were. Ignorance and mistakes tend to be downplayed or even romanticized.

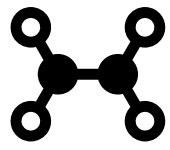
D: Instead of making accusatory statements like the authors of "The Fourth Turning" (William Strauss and Neil Howe). In the book, the authors offer an intriguing perspective on the cyclical nature of history and generational influence on society. Their perspective's strengths include its historical patterns, predictive potential, and insights into generational dynamics. However, it also has weaknesses related to empirical evidence, determinism, cultural variations, subjectivity, and criticism from academic circles. Strauss and Howe failed to express their own perspectives using "I" statements. For example, saying/writing, "I believe..." or "I feel..." This can make your points less confrontational and more personal. People generally like to think of themselves as competent and knowledgeable. Recognizing one's past ignorance can challenge this self-perception, making it difficult to acknowledge that one didn't know as much as they do now.

E: Encourage the other person to think deeper about their beliefs by asking open-ended questions. This can promote critical thinking and a more open conversation. Over time, individuals tend to gain more knowledge and experience, and as they do, they may forget what it was like to be less informed. This can lead to a disconnect between their current understanding and their past ignorance.

F: Identify shared values or concerns to build bridges. Even in the most divisive debates, there are often some common goals or principles that both parties can agree on. Ensure you have a solid understanding of the topic under discussion. Being well-informed can bolster your arguments and help you present your perspective more effectively. Present facts, data, and logical arguments to support your viewpoint. Avoid emotional arguments, as they may be less effective with individuals who lack empathy. Acknowledge the other person's emotions and perspective, even if you disagree with them. Validating their feelings can help keep the conversation more constructive.

G: Not every debate can be productive. If the conversation becomes hostile, disrespectful, or unproductive, it may be best to disengage. Your mental and emotional well-being should be a priority. When your opponent goes “low” you go “high”, demonstrate empathy, open-mindedness, and respect in your own communication. Your approach can influence the behavior of others. Changing someone's perspective or level of empathy may not happen in a single conversation. Be patient and open to the possibility of gradual change over time.

Fortunately, my webcast is only possible because humans are the only animals with an imagination, which we can employ to help us keep our hearts and minds open. The stories we tell ourselves are often hazy at best, when we realize that a positive byproduct of capitalism is that most folk's greed and self interest serves the common good. In my webcast, Donald Trump effectively marketed himself as the beacon on top of the Capitalist Hill. In America, for every mini Trump among us, there must be at least five thousand poor and the affluence of the few supposes the indigence of the many. The affluence of the rich excites the indignation of the poor, who are often both driven by want, prompted by envy and most often culminates in imitation.



THIS TOO SHALL PASS

If a critical mass of people were to collectively realize that money is a human construct, it could potentially have several negative consequences. These are: Loss of Confidence in the Monetary System - Disruption of Financial Systems - Increased Economic Uncertainty - Challenges in Trade & Exchange & Social Disruptions. I take comfort in how little notoriety I have as a self anointed public intellectual. Most folks don't question things to the extent that I do. Maybe, I'm the one to blame for all the world's problems.

I also don't like it when Donald Trump lies. Fortunately, lying is a funny thing, for it leads to truth—what's highly offensive is when people lie and get upset with you when you don't worship their lies. I've noticed when like-minded individuals gather, their opinions tend to become more extreme as they reinforce each other's beliefs. This polarization can contribute to an "us vs. them" mentality, increased animosity between groups, and a breakdown of collaborative decision-making that can lead to "the tyranny of the majority" which suppresses the rights and interests of minority groups.

In a democratic society, majority rule is a fundamental principle, but it must be balanced with the protection of minority rights and interests. However, when the majority imposes its will without considering minority perspectives, it can lead to the marginalization and oppression of minority populations. No rational argument or well intended (unconditional love) will have a rational effect on Donald Trump, a man who does not want to adopt a rational attitude.

Whereas, a rationalist is simply someone for whom it is more important to learn than to be proved right; someone who is willing to learn from others - not by simply taking over another's opinions, but by gladly allowing others to criticize his ideas and by gladly criticizing the ideas of others.

We should therefore claim, in the name of tolerance, the right not to tolerate the intolerant. We should claim that any movement or individual preaching intolerance places themselves outside the law, and we should consider incitement to intolerance and persecution as criminal, in the same way as we should consider incitement to murder, or to kidnapping, or to the revival of the slave trade, as criminal.

The power of Donald Trump's words and our reactions to them are interconnected, but the ultimate impact depends on how we choose to react. Words have the power to influence,

inspire, motivate, comfort, hurt, and even incite action. They can shape our perceptions, emotions, and beliefs. Trump's words carry meaning, intention, and the potential to leave a lasting impact on individuals or communities. Words have been used throughout history to effect social change, ignite movements, or spread hate and division. So, in this sense, words possess a certain power.

Fortunately, one by one, each person who despises Donald Trump's rhetoric can take the power back. Our reactions to his words determine how deeply they affect us. We have the ability to interpret, internalize, and assign meaning to the words we encounter. Our individual beliefs, values, emotions, and self-esteem influence how we perceive and react to different words or messages.

It's important to note that our reactions are influenced by our own experiences, perspectives, and personal growth. The interaction between words and reactions is complex. While words hold potential power, their impact can vary depending on the individual and context. One person may find certain words hurtful or offensive, while another may not be affected in the same way. Our reactions can shape the power and significance we assign to words, and we have the ability/power to choose how we respond.

Ultimately, the power of our reactions lies in our capacity to exercise emotional intelligence, resilience, and critical thinking. We can choose to let hurtful words affect us deeply, or we can opt to interpret them with empathy and understanding. We can respond with anger or seek constructive dialogue. Our reactions can determine the extent to which words shape our emotions, beliefs, and actions. By developing self-awareness, emotional resilience, and thoughtful engagement, we can navigate the power of words in a way that aligns with our well-being and the betterment of our interactions with others.

Next time Donald Trump's rhetoric make you feel pain or negative thoughts, simply view it as energy. Just start seeing these inner experiences as energy passing through your heart and your consciousness. Then relax. Relax your heart until you visualize yourself face-to-face with DT, the man you're telling yourself you hate or are afraid of.

Stay open and receptive so you can be present right where the tension is. You must embrace being uncomfortable right at the place of the tightness and pain, and then relax and go even deeper. I constantly remind myself, words have no power. All the power rests in how I choose to react to words. If someone's rhetoric or your very own self talk is a major problem for you, you will continue to fear words. That fear will become part of your psyche.

For many Americans, even though he is no longer US President, the fear of Trump returning in 2024 is real. If you are doing something to avoid thoughts of a Trump victory in 2024, then pain is running your life. All of your thoughts and feelings will be affected by your fears. A man who knows himself can step outside himself and watch his own reactions like an observer. Folks who know me all agree on one thing; I suffer from an extreme case of excess self regard. Fortunately, most folks don't read as much as I do - and unlike Charlie Munger, I'm pretty insignificant in our capitalist society.

In Donald Trump’s defense, one well-known study conducted by researchers at the University of California, Berkeley, and Stanford University in 2012, involved giving one player double the starting cash and higher salary in Monopoly. The results suggested that those who were advantaged from the beginning tended to exhibit more dominant and even aggressive behaviors, and they attributed their success to their personal skills rather than acknowledging the role of luck.

It's important to note that these potential negative consequences depend on the scale and scope of the realization, as well as the subsequent actions and responses of individuals and institutions. The impact would likely be complex and multifaceted, influenced by numerous factors such as the existing economic and social structures, government policies, and the ability to adapt and transition to alternative systems if necessary.

"All our final decisions are made in a state of mind that is not going to last”

Marcel Proust